

# THIRD ALL ASIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE



SINGAPORE  
976

## cover illustration ▼

*Miss Jeyanthi Nathan (left) and Miss Rosalind Yeo, from the Lutheran churches in Malaysia and Singapore, represented the interests of youth in their area at the Third All Asia Lutheran Conference.*

*"On the Role of Youth" (page 64), a statement drawn up by all the youth delegates, was greatly appreciated by the participants gathered in Singapore.*

# LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Department of Church Cooperation

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## THIRD ALL ASIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

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29th NOVEMBER 4th DECEMBER 1976

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# Chairman's Word

It is a great privilege for me to speak on behalf of the African churches at this conference. We are here to learn, to meet, to pray and to work. We have not come to do, but to learn, to be inspired, to be uplifted. We are here to learn, to be inspired, to be uplifted. We are here to learn, to be inspired, to be uplifted. We are here to learn, to be inspired, to be uplifted.

How can we express our thanks and appreciation for the leadership and work of the General Secretary, Dr. K. Rajaratnam?

We who have taken part in the All Asia Lutheran Conference in Singapore express our gratitude and appreciation to the L.W.F. for making this conference possible.

We thank the General Secretary for his presence and participation.

We express our deep appreciation for the presence and participation of Dr. Carl Hellberg, Director of the Department of Church Cooperation. We have had the benefit of his mature leadership and his sympathetic understanding of the needs and problems of the Asian churches. He has become a dear friend of the churches in Asia, and under his leadership we hope and pray that Asian churches will grow from strength to strength. We express our deep thanks for his services.

We express our deep appreciation to our Asia Secretary, Dr. K. Rajaratnam, for his leadership and planning of this successful conference. During this conference, people of different colours, cultures and languages have worshipped, studied and planned together in peace and in fellowship. Friendship and trust in one another have been the unique features of this conference, and a lot of hard work and prayer on his part must have been behind such a conference. We express our thanks to Dr. K. Rajaratnam and we assure him of our continued cooperation.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Josiah Kibira, Chairman, Commission on Church Cooperation, who was invited to this conference to represent Africa, could not be present. We are however, happy for the presence of the Rev. Amon Mwakisunga, and we hope that the relationship between the African and Asian Lutheran churches can be nurtured and promoted further.

A word of appreciation is also due to the L.W.F. staff, Dr. Dan Martensen, Mr. Brian Neldner, Mr. Odd Pedersen and Rev. Risto Lehtonen for their efficient cooperation in the conference.

Our deep gratitude is due also to the local churches under the guidance of the two bishops: Bishop Carl M. Fisher and Bishop E.B. Muthusami who, in acting as their churches' representatives, most effectively brought much hospitality and efficient administration to the proceedings.

of the conference.

We thank sincerely those who prepared lectures for the conference, Dr. Andrew Hsiao, Dr. H. Parkin, Dr. M. Abel, Dr. P. Prabhudas, Dr. S.M. Hutagalung, Dr. P. Sormin, and Rev. G. Johnson for his daily devotions and Bible Studies.

To those who presided over the meetings, the chair persons and secretaries of the groups and all those who participated in the plenary and group discussions, our gratitude is due.

Our gratitude is also due to the secretaries, Miss Janet Coleman of LWF/DCC and Miss Betty Sing, who worked for the conference with enthusiasm.

But without the grace of our Lord, this conference would not have been possible. The Holy Spirit was guiding us, and we pray that the same spirit will enable us to put into practice all the good things discussed in our conference.

Dr. F.H. Sianipar

# Director's Greetings

When the Lord gathered his disciples for the Last Supper "in the night when he was betrayed" that took place in the upper room of an ordinary house in Jerusalem. The noise from the street below must have reached those gathered in the room as they broke the bread and shared the wine. In other words - this very important event for the Christian faith did not take place in a secluded temple away from the world. The reality of the Incarnation puts us as members of the Christian Church not away from the world but places us in the midst of the world. It is in this here and now, in the realities of our world of today that we are called to serve the Lord.

We were reminded of this reality as we also gathered in the upper room in the Ambassador Hotel in Singapore for our opening Communion Service. We also experienced how the noise from the street below reached us at that moment and how it reminded us of the reality in which we are called to serve the churches and nationals of Asia today. This became a short of lasting impression not just from the opening service but from all the important issues that the All Asia Lutheran Conference in 1976 dealt with. We have to recognise the nearness of the reality of the situation in the world in which the Church is called to serve.

In retrospect this consultation in Singapore demonstrated especially three important elements of growing importance for the participating churches themselves and for their role in the worldwide fellowship of the Lutheran World Federation as well as of the Church universal.

The first element could be identified as a growing recognition of the unity between the Asian Lutheran churches. This in itself is a testimony to the power of the Gospel to unite inspite of great differences. Geographically Asia is a continent, and as such a unit. But from the point of view of socio-political systems, religious and cultural traditions as well as of history, it becomes more difficult to talk about Asia as a unit. There are certainly great differences. As you travel from India to North Korea, to Japan or you turn to the south visiting the churches in New Guinea or in the Philippines you experience different worlds. There is however, one very important and decisive common denominator for all of the Asian churches. Asia holds since ages past

within its boundaries rich treasures of deep philosophy and devoted religiosity. In fact many refer to Asia as one of the most important sources of the spiritual inheritance of mankind. The awareness of this common denominator and of the obligation contained in it to assist the rest of a confused world of today to recover spiritual values in human life is no doubt a strong uniting factor also between Lutheran churches of Asia. It is true that Lutherans in Asia represent but a fraction of the small Christian minority groups in Asia. It became clear however, during the days in Singapore that confessional differences are not there to separate the Christian minority groups in Asia, but to enrich them in their witness to the diversified Asian societies as well as to the world at large. The ecumenical openness of APAS, as well as the willingness to share with churches of other denominations in the evangelistic outreach through mass media and other modern technical means, give testimony to this. We find therefore in Asia a growing recognition of what unites the churches there, namely their common obligation to give witness to Asian spiritual and cultural values transformed in them through their Christian faith and to carry this witness to the rest of the world, so much impoverished by superfluous secularism and materialism.

The conference in Singapore demonstrated further how Asian Lutherans are increasingly prepared to rely on themselves, on their own resources and gifts in strengthening and expanding the services of their churches. All those attending the consultation were duly elected delegates of their churches - of course with the exception of LWF staff serving as consultants. The fact that the conference was initiated and led by the Asian churches themselves, and that no one from outside attended "ex-officio" as representatives of "supporting agencies" or of an "international board" showed clearly that this was a truly Asian Lutheran consultation. The delegates represented their churches, churches planted in their own hearts and in the soil of their own home countries. The concept of the Church as a foreign body in Asia or as something imposed on Asia from outside had disappeared once and for all. Only those elected by the churches, thus having the confidence of the churches, were listened to, were taken seriously. With this strong sense for the Asian character of their own churches the delegates to the conference revealed clearly a growing sense of the obligations, sacrifices and responsibilities that this imposes on the churches and their members. The responsibility of the churches to give clear Christian witness to the turmoils of the socio-political scene of many Asian countries, to care for the young people and for women, and to proclaim the Gospel to their own people - all this was emphasised and spelt out in practical terms as the responsibility of the churches themselves. None of us who were present in Singapore can easily forget the challenges made, particularly by the youth delegates, that this responsibility be faced seriously and squarely by the leaders of the Asian Lutheran churches.

themselves. This holds certainly great promise for the future - especially in view of the positive responses given by the church leaders.

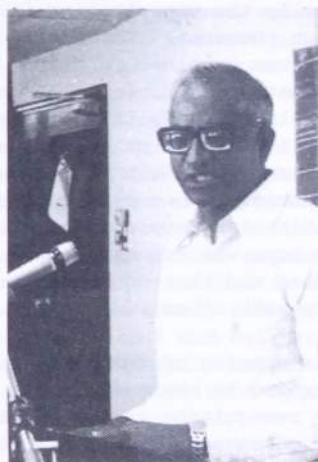
Finally the consultation in Singapore opened up new horizons for the Asian churches. This Third All Asia Lutheran Conference brought the churches together on highly relevant issues, shared by all the participating churches. This brought forth a strong recognition of their mutual responsibility to share between themselves their resources, experiences and skills in proclaiming the Gospel to Asia of today. It was deeply felt that each church must seek the cooperation of other churches. The coming together regularly on national, regional and continental levels is not just desirable but a must for the future. The hope was expressed that new joint programmes like APAS be established and that no church any longer works in isolation but in fellowship with others.

This opening of new horizons certainly also went beyond Asia - was extended to the rest of the world. The sense of unity as well as of the recognition of the specific talents given to the Asian churches, and consequently the obligation to share these talents with other churches, encouraged them to invite the worldwide fellowship of the LWF to make use of them in the universal mission task of the Church to the whole world. In this respect the conference became quite specific, especially vis-à-vis the Western world now being subjected to intensified mission from ancient Asian religions and new religious movements with roots in the Asian spiritual inheritance. The conference in Singapore also served the purpose of preparing the Asian churches for their participation in the VIth Assembly of the LWF. The number of recommendations submitted by the conference to the Assembly, as well as to the various units of the LWF, shows the seriousness of the Asian churches to consider themselves as equal partners in the LWF ready to give to as well as to receive from the rest of the members of this worldwide confessional body.

In this respect the All Asia Lutheran Conference pointed to what lies beyond Dar es Salaam, namely the recognition and realisation of the need for an "on-going" Assembly in the LWF with open doors for an "on-going" dialogue, an "on-going" sharing of resources in order to carry forth our mutual responsibility for the Church universal in mission.

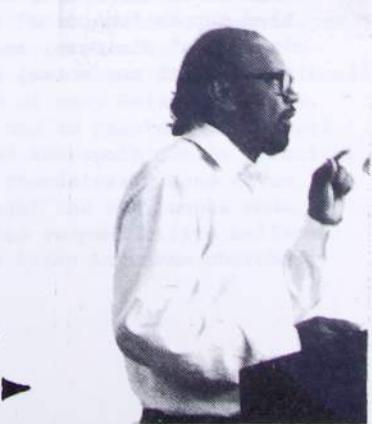
Dr. Carl-J. Hellberg

Bishop Carl Fisher (left) and Bishop Ernest Muthusami, presiding bishops of the host churches - Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore, respectively - welcome the Third All Asia Lutheran Conference.



Dr. Carl-J. Hellberg, Director of the LWF's Department of Church Cooperation, brings greetings to the delegates.

Dr. Kunchala Rajaratnam, Secretary for Asia in the Department of Church Cooperation, emphasises a point during his introduction to the Conference.



# Asia Secretary's Introduction

One of the historic moments of the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation was its meeting in Adelaide during May 1975. The Lutheran Church of Australia, a white western community in an Asian setting, as a Lutheran church, has been making genuine efforts to identify itself with Asian Lutheran churches in Indonesia, India, and elsewhere, in addition to its historical relations to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea. It was at this meeting, a Chinese church leader, young, dedicated and dynamic, Rev. Stephen Cheung King Man of the Chinese Rhenish Church, stood up in the plenary session of the CCC, and demanded "We want an All Asia Lutheran Conference". Under the chairmanship of the Bishop Zurenuo Zurewe of ELCONG, all the Asian delegates present at this CCC meeting met separately and requested the CCC to arrange for an All Asia Lutheran Conference. The CCC was glad to approve the proposal and thus the Third All Asia Lutheran Conference was convened in Singapore during November 29 - December 4, 1976. It was twelve years ago (1964) that the last All Asia Lutheran Conference met in Ranchi, India.

### Christ in Asia:

In terms of the theme, Christ seemed to be confronting the Lutheran churches in Asia, 'I am (in Asia) before Abraham was! I reached the West coast of India no sooner had I been crucified. I reached China and all the lands of Asia a few hundred years ago. How will you relate my message of the cross and resurrection to these ancient people of Asia today who have been in search of Truth from the days even before Abraham was and who are today baffled by the enormity and complexity of the economic and political problems, challenges and uncertainties?' The context of the All Asia Lutheran Conference was precisely this.

### Basic Objectives:

In addition to being a Conference of Churches, this was also a preparatory meeting of the delegates to the LWF Assembly in Dar es Salaam. Thus it had a twofold purpose: (i) to focus on the fundamental tasks and challenges of the Lutheran churches in today's Asia and (ii) while introducing to the churches and their delegates to the VIth Assembly of LWF the goals, the concerns and the organisational pattern of the Assembly, to give them an opportunity to feed their basic concerns into the agenda of the Assembly.

Participants:

Nearly all the Lutheran churches, both member and non-member - were represented at the conference. Nearly 100 participants were invited from churches including staff. Of them 15 were young people and 13 women. All Asian delegates to the Assembly except three were participants at this meeting.

Preparation:

A preliminary consultation between the Asia Secretary and the staff of the Department of Studies, an intensive consultation within the Department of Church Cooperation, resulted in a suggested format of the conference - which was part of the Agenda of the CCC Meeting 1976 Saskatoon. Staff discussions with the Asian members of the Commission at Saskatoon, Dr. Andrew Hsiao, (Rev. Palti Sihombing cancelled his trip to the Commission Meeting at the last minute) was another useful process in preparation.

But the main preparation for the meeting was at the October (1976) Consultation of the North/Southeast Asia Church Leaders and the APAS Theological Education Conference that followed. (Note: A full report of the APAS Theological Education Conference published separately. Copies if required may be had from the Asia Desk/Department of Church Cooperation or Theological Education Desk/Department of Studies, LWF.) These conferences prepared the climate of unity of purpose and for identification of the needs of the churches.

The leaders who participated in the All Asia Lutheran Conference were already excellently prepared for its agenda.

Basic Issues discussed on the Assembly:

The following papers of high quality, prepared in advance, in each case were presented on the theme "Christ in Asia".

1. Effective Proclamation of the Gospel in Asia
2. Challenges of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity in Asia
3. Social and Political Challenges to the Churches in Asia
4. Self-Reliance
5. Regional (Asia) and Global Partnership for Mission in Asia
6. Lutheranism in the Context of Ecumenism in Asia

Format of the Conference:

Plenary presentation and discussions of the papers, intensive group deliberations resulting in recommendations, which were in turn discussed by the plenary - with adequate time at all these three stages

was the strength of the conference.

The clear and forceful expression of the concerns at this conference represented therefore a real and spontaneous vision of the churches.

The Basic Features:

I. Mission of the Churches in Asia

The Mission of the Church has been of the utmost concern to the whole conference. Each group reflected this basic concern. The North/Southeast Asia Church Leaders Conference at Manila only one month earlier (October 18-20, 1976) set the tone for this concern. Rev. Stephen Tsui's paper on mission at Manila was a great stimulus in this context. Both Manila and Singapore conferences decided therefore on three basic steps, local, regional and global to involve all the Lutheran churches in meaningful and effective Mission in Asia.

1. Local

Stimulate local churches to identify the problems, challenges and opportunities for mission in their local situation and use APAS local units for such efforts in 1977. Consultations are already underway.

2. Regional

Utilising the local churches' thinking on mission, as input to an All Asia Seminar on the theology and practice of Mission in Asia, the identity of Lutheran churches and possible programmes and projects of mission, to be undertaken individually and jointly by Asian churches. The CCC has approved the Consultation on Mission in 1978 at its meeting in Geneva, April 1977.

3. Global

Bring the results of regional discussions to global round table discussions in 1979 with representatives of Asian churches, and international Church/Mission agencies. At this consultation, the so called 'ground rules' for cooperation between different agencies through LWF/CCC will also be discussed. (Vide CCC new Mission Mandate elsewhere in this report.)

II. Unity of purpose, planning and action

The Asian church leaders demonstrated a unique sense of unity of the Lutheran churches. Excellent understanding and fellowship was established thanks to both the Manila and Singapore conferences.

There is a greater desire amongst the churches in Asia to learn from one another, visit each other and also to help one another. Already many exchange visits have taken place and many more are in the offing.

III. Asia Lutheran News (ALN)

Both Manila and Singapore strongly desired a monthly news media for Asian churches that would keep all churches in Asia and global friends informed of all church and mission activities which could serve as inspiration to others. The ALN is to be an Asian effort. Hong Kong churches volunteered to meet the initial costs of publication, till all the Asian churches extended their support - finance and news wise. Indeed the first number has already appeared.

IV. Participation of Jordan and Israel at the All Asia Lutheran Conference

For the first time, representatives of Jordan and Israel Lutheran churches participated in an All Asia Lutheran Conference. Their participation enriched the fellowship of Asian Lutherans.

V. Leadership of Women and Youth at the Conference

Women and youth representatives chaired many plenary sessions with great success. Both the groups met separately and brought very constructive proposals for increased participation of these vital sections of the community in the total life of the Church.

The leadership of two young women Rosalind Yeo of the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore and Jeyanthi Nathan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore was greatly appreciated.

VI. Asian Churches' Confidence in LWF

The confidence the church leaders repose in the Lutheran World Federation and in the work of all its units, Church Cooperation, Studies, World Service and Communication is worthy to be noted. It underlines the viability of international church relations based on humility and integrity.

VII. Decisions reflect Maturity in Sharing

Many of the conference recommendations were addressed to the churches in Asia. One of them appealed to the churches to make even a humble beginning in contributing to the Statement of Needs of the LWF. The Asia Secretary is already promoting this recommendation amongst the member churches in Asia. At least one church (Chinese Rhenish Church) is ready to start its contribution towards

the 1978 Statement of Needs for LWF/CCC.

There are more than 3 million Lutherans in Asia and through CCC Asian churches have received on the average US\$ 500,000 over the past many years. This receipt averages to US\$ 0.16.6 cents a year per member.

If 3 million Asian Lutherans can contribute per member per annum

US\$ 1	we have	US\$ 3,000,000
\$ 0.50	" "	\$ 1,500,000
\$ 0.25	" "	\$ 750,000
\$ 0.10	" "	\$ 300,000
\$ 0.05	" "	\$ 150,000

Why not start with US\$ 0.05 cents and reach up to US\$ 0.50 cents a member per annum over a definite period of time? Given the motivation, involvement of all the members of the churches, and proper organisation, a so called poor receiving church can become a giving church! Will Asian leaders accept this challenge?

This report together with the full papers presented and some background information is placed before the churches of Asia and all related and interested churches and agencies in the world for whatever it is worth.

It has been the special privilege of the Asia Secretary to bring the Asian church leaders together in true fellowship, respect and love for one another. The Asia secretary takes this opportunity to express deep appreciation to all the church leaders in Asia for their unreserved cooperation extended to him in his ministry.

Deep appreciation is expressed to all agencies that have extended financial support to this consultation through the LWF.

His thanks are also due to all his colleagues in LWF, especially in the Department of Church Cooperation, his secretary Miss Janet Coleman, and above all to the Department Director, Dr. Carl-J. Hellberg for his deep commitment to the cause of the Church of Christ in Asia, Africa and Latin America, his deep sense of integrity in his leadership, which have all been a source of inspiration for the Asia Desk in its service to the Asian churches.

It has been the good fortune of Asian churches to have had Bishop Josiah Kibira, a great Christian leader from the continent of Africa, respected all over the world for his Christian humility, experience and commitment, as Chairman of CCC.

The two Asian members of the Commission, Dr. Andrew Hsiao of Hong Kong, a world Lutheran leader in the making, and Rev. P.M. Sihombing from Indonesia, have been a wonderful support to the Asia Secretary's ministry. Our thanks go to these leaders.

The Chairman of the All Asia Lutheran Conference, Dr. F.H. Sianipar, General Secretary of HKBP, Indonesia much deserves the applause of the Asian churches for his gracious leadership of the conference.

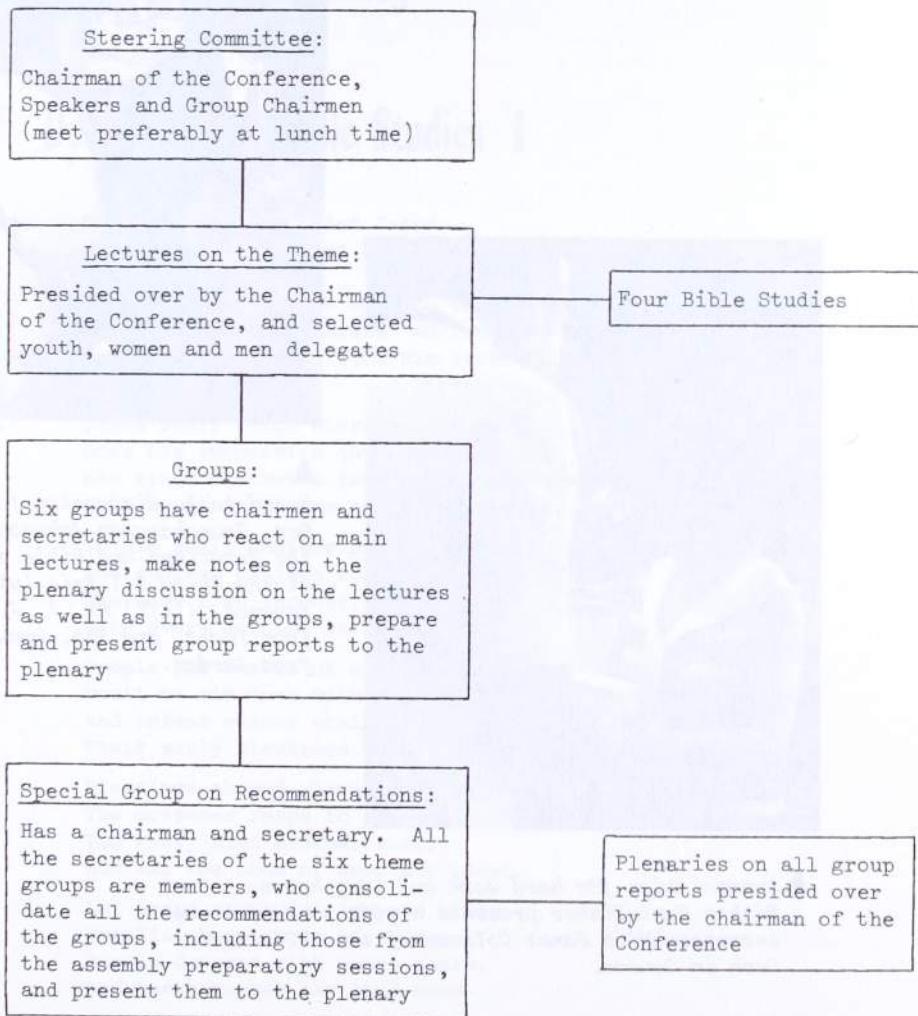
The leaders of the conference, especially all those who presented papers at the conference, are to be thanked.

Appreciation is also expressed to the Christian Conference of Asia for its participation through its representative Rev. M.A. Simandjuntak.

The host churches, the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore, Bishop Carl Fisher and Bishop E.B. Muthusami are to be warmly thanked for their unparalleled hospitality, as well as to Miss Betty Sing for her secretarial assistance.

Dr. Kunchala Rajaratnam

# Format



## MAIN FEATURES:

- I. Opening and Concluding Devotions
- II. Bible Studies on the Theme
- III. Six Theme Lectures
- IV. Six Group Discussions on Lectures
- V. One Special Group on Recommendations
- VI. Assembly Preparatory Sessions
- VII. Greetings from the Lutheran World Federation  
(General Secretary, Chairman of the Commission on Church  
Cooperation, Director of the Department of Church Cooperation)



▲ Appreciation for hard work and long hours: Bishop Carl Fisher presents a gift to conference secretary Miss Janet Coleman of the LWF's Asia Desk in Geneva.



▲ Round table discussion for (centre) Rev. Gnanabaranam Johnson, who led the devotions and Bible studies at the Third All Asia Lutheran Conference, (left) Mr. A. J. Arnold from India, and Rev. Daoud Haddad from Jordan.

# Devotions and Bible Studies on 'New Community'

## Devotions and Bible Studies I

Leader: Dear friends in Christ Jesus,  
we have come together today to thank God for what  
He does for us,  
to listen to what He says to us,  
to pray that He liberate us from the bondage of ignorance  
and also to receive from Him strength to serve our  
fellowmen.

All: Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

To Him shall endless prayer be made;  
And endless praises crown His head;  
His Name like incense, shall arise  
With every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of ev'ry tongue  
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their early blessings on His Name.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns;  
The prisoner leaps to loose his chains;  
The weary find eternal rest,  
And all the sons of want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring  
Peculiar honours to our King;  
Angels descent with songs again,  
And earth repeat the loud Amen.

Bible Reading: Rom. 1: 18-32.

Confession of sins:

L.: Let us confess in silence our individual sins and also  
the sins of our community of which we are a part.....

O Holy Spirit, there are many times when we have not listened  
to your voice. We were afraid to receive you, thinking you  
would certainly hinder our sinful pleasures.

A.: Forgive us our sins, O Lord.

L.: O Jesus Christ,  
we did not walk in the way you have paved for us.  
We failed to witness you in our words and deeds.

A.: Forgive us our sins, O Lord.

L.: O our Heavenly Father,  
we are often ungrateful to you, though you showered your grace upon us. We did not love our fellowmen, though they are also created in your image.

A.: Forgive our sins, O Lord. Amen.

L.: The blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (I Jn. 1:7; 2: 2) What the Lord once told the paralytic, the same he tells us now: "Your sins are forgiven". (Mk. 2: 5)

Bible Meditation: Rom. 1: 18-32

We are here to take part in a Bible meditation. Is it some more information about the Bible? Often we are bombarded with various information through sermons, lectures, travel impressions, etc. Such information is necessary. How can one know the horrors of apartheid or caste system, if one is not informed? When an astronaut informs about his travel to a particular planet, we get the desire to have the same thrilling experience, but we know, it will not be possible. On the other hand, when one talks about the joy and peace that one enjoys from the fellowship with God, it is possible for us to experience the same joy and peace in God. Bible meditation helps us to have the God-experience in Christ. Meditation helps us to open our spiritual eyes to see how close God is to us in Christ. We do not try through our meditation to know what God is, but we come to know what we are in the presence of God. We pray to God, "Search me, O God, and know my heart ... and lead me in the way everlasting". (Ps. 139: 23f.) In meditation we understand what we are in the light of God. In meditation we also receive strength to carry out the task that God wants us to do.

The theme for the Sixth Assembly of the L.W.F. in Tanzania is: "In Christ - a New Community". Who would wish the New Community to be a foolish community? It is the foolishness of man that breaks the fellowship with God and fellowmen. The wrath of God is revealed not only against all ungodliness and wickedness, but also against all types of foolishness. We often find the wrath of foolish men against God, accusing God of the consequences of sin committed by mankind.

Sometimes one finds oneself in the situation of "defending" the holy and righteous God before sinful men, saying, "God is not as bad as you think". Where the Gospel is preached less and less, there man's ignorance of God is increasing more and more. In this Bible passage we find a number of words connected with knowing and being ignorant.

- v. 19. What can be known about God is plain to them.
- v. 20. His invisible nature .... has been clearly perceived.
- v. 21. They knew God.
- v. 22. Claiming to be wise, they became foolish.
- v. 28. They did not acknowledge God.
- v. 31. They were foolish.
- v. 32. They know God's degree.

Why do people live such a perverse life as depicted in verses 26-31? The answer is: they did not want to retain God in their knowledge (v. 28 KJV). Since people did not retain God in their knowledge, they have lost the distinction between good and bad, the beautiful and the ugly. Though people know that evil will be punished, still they do it (v. 32). The one who does evil in spite of his knowledge of the consequences of evil, is a greater fool than one who does not know very well the consequences of evil. Most of the evil done in the world is due to lack of godly wisdom. This godly wisdom is different from that of worldly wisdom. The wisdom of the spirit is not the wisdom of the flesh (cf. II Cor. 1: 12).

In the end of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus does not divide people into good and bad, believers and non-believers, sinners and saints, rich and poor, but he divides people into wise and foolish. Jesus divides the ten virgins into wise ones and foolish ones (Mt. 25: 1-13). He tells about a wise man, who, having found a treasure in the land, buys that land (Mt. 13: 44). The foolish rich man accumulates lots of wealth, not knowing he has to die soon (Lk. 12: 16-21). The wise servants multiply their talents, whereas the foolish one keeps his as it is (Mt. 25: 14 ff). In the Tamil translation of the parable of the Prodigal Son, the sentence that the son came back to his senses is rendered as, "when the buddhi came back to order" Buddhi means knowledge. It is clear that Jesus wants his followers to be wise ones. God wants his children, not only to be good, not only to be faithful to him, but also to be wise. The real wise ones will be intelligent enough to have faith in God and clever enough to do good to others.

If someone speculates well in business and makes a lot of money, he is said to be wise. If an army general is cunning in war tactics and annihilates others, he is considered a wise hero. This is

worldly wisdom. Paul writes that the Greeks seek wisdom (I Cor. 1: 22). Who does not want to be wise? People behave foolishly because they have no contact with the source of wisdom. Jesus is the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1: 24). Paul writes: "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age" (I Cor. 2: 6). God alone is wise (Rom. 16: 27). He is the source of all wisdom, wherefrom one can get wisdom (Prov. 1: 7; 2: 6). God gives to the artisans wisdom to make wonderful things (Ex. 31: 2). He gives the rulers wisdom to judge properly (I Kings 3: 28). There are artisans who make deadly weapons. There are rulers who misuse their power. Such people lack wisdom. There are people who think that if they were gods, they could maintain the world better. Such people lack wisdom in understanding God's patience and the gravity of man's sin.

It is easier to distinguish between the worldly wise and the worldly foolish, but it is rather difficult to distinguish between the godly wise ones and the rest. When the two houses were built, they looked alike. Only the crisis situation, viz. the rain and the flood made the difference clear. In the book "Shepherd of Hermas", written in the second century, an illustration is given. When one looks at the forest in winter or when the trees shed their leaves, there is no difference between the living trees and the dead ones. But when spring comes, green leaves sprout from the living branches. But the dead ones remain dry for ever. People may claim to be wise, but in God's presence they are foolish, for they corrupt the revelation of God (cf. v. 22).

The Buddhist canon, Dhammapada X. 136 says that "A fool does not know when he commits his evil deeds". The wise man knows what is evil (cf. II Pet. 1: 4). This type of fleeing is not a cowardly act, but a courageous deed of a wise man. The fool does not flee from the trap of sin. It is the foolish ones who say that there is no God (Ps. 14: 1). They do not want to leave their sins. They are afraid of God, who is righteous and powerful. To remove the fear of punishment for their evil deeds, they say, that there is no God. They manipulate the revelation of God to fit their fantasies. Paul writes that they exchange the splendour of the immortal God. "They boast of their wisdom, but they have made fools of themselves" (v. 22 NEB). This process could be seen in the history of religion. They called God deistic, impersonal, some type of being. They do not want God to be the God, who stands before man and asks as he asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?". They want to "neutralize" God, so that he does not interfere in their corruptive activities. Any presentation of God, which is not Trinitarian, is not the true presentation of God.

Do the godly wise ones never commit sin? Even if these wise ones fall down in sin, they will quickly get up, feel ashamed of it and flee from that place, just like the lamb that, having fallen down in the stinking puddle, sprang up and ran away. Only the pigs enjoy falling into the dirty puddle and stay there, like the foolish men, who "enjoy" the pleasures of evil. We Christians are called to be saints (cf. I Cor. 1: 2). We Christians are called believers. We are also called godly wise. Jesus says, "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Mt. 10: 16). But we are often as foolish as doves and as poisonous as the serpents.

Other religions also talk about wisdom. The word "Buddha" means the wise one. If we are enlightened people, we are also Buddhists in the literal sense, not in the technical sense. According to Dhammapada VIII, 111, the one day life of a wise man is better than hundred years of an ignorant person. One of the definitions for God in Indian religious tradition is Satchitaananda. Sat means existence and being for ever. Chit means intelligence and consciousness. Aananda means joy and peace. This definition lacks the essential qualities of the Christian God, such as holiness, grace and justice. But the word Chit points to the Wisdom of God, the Word of God, through which the creation, whether new or old, came into existence. The further we get away from the source of divine wisdom, namely Jesus Christ, the more we indulge in the wisdom of the flesh and we are on the way to self-destruction. The Hindus talk about different ways of reaching God. There is the way of devotion, the way of good deeds, the way of rituals, the way of surrender and also the Jnana maarga, i.e.c the way of wisdom. Jesus is the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1: 30). Wherever the wisdom of God is manifested, there Jesus is present, incognito. True wisdom obeys its author, God, trusts in Him and transmits the knowledge of God to coming generations and also to the generations, who do not know Jesus Christ personally. Both the father and the mother transmit the wisdom to their children (Prov. 1: 8). The wise children learn this wisdom and the foolish ones do not (Prov. 13: 1). The earlier generation has transmitted the divine wisdom of salvation through Jesus to us. If we do not transmit the divine wisdom, namely the Gospel, we are not wise ones. There are people who say such a transmission of the Gospel to other generations and to the coming generation is not necessary. A boy rides a bicycle. He presses the pedals and the cycle moves forward. He stops the pedaling for a while and still the cycle goes forward. If the small boy thinks, "I need not pedal but the cycle will go on and on", then the boy is not wise. Likewise, if the Gospel is not preached to others, things will not go as they should. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there arises a new understanding of God, new fellowship among men, irrespective of colour,

culture and civilization, new hope for a new world of justice and mercy. But where the Gospel is rejected, one finds the signs of decivilization. Whether the next generation or the non-Christian world accepts the message of divine wisdom or not, it is the duty of the wise ones to preach the Gospel.

Verse 19 says, what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. If so, why should we preach about God? The people knew about the existence of God but they did not know the Christhood of God. They did not know the real characteristics of God. I know a person. I know his head and shoulders. I know how clever he is and how strong he is. This knowledge is not enough for me to say, that he is my friend or that I know him full well, for I do not know his heart. I do not know, how kind he is, how honest he is and how just he is. Many people know the head and the shoulders of God, viz. the omniscience and omnipotence, but not the heart of God. The heart of God is his Son, Jesus Christ. If one does not know the heart of God, one's knowledge of God is very limited. Johannes Gottschick, the scholarly German theologian of the last century, said: "Without Jesus I would be an atheist". Jesus said: "He who has seen me has seen the Father". (Jn. 14: 9) In other words, he who has not seen Jesus, has not understood the Father as he really is.

We should not forget the fact that it is not only knowledge that helps to understand God, but also faith, that brings us nearer to God. Faith is an extraordinary way of communication between God and man. The message is preached. The hearer says that he cannot accept this, for it is against human reason. I know incidences, where the hearer rejected the message consciously, but the message went deep in his subconscious and helped him many years later. No witness can be in vain, as no prayer is in vain.

Paul writes about the consequences of manipulating the true revelation and of rejecting the Son of God. We see signs of degradation in the society that laughs at the Gospel. Magazines that print many scientific articles also print horoscopes. In the West one sees the interest of people in occultism, Guru-movements and other cults that talk about the so-called micro-cosmic dimensions. People are frustrated in their lives and try to escape into such cults.

Romans 1: 18-32 describe the consequences of not retaining the true knowledge of God. Ignorance of God's plan for the salvation of mankind and the refusal to accept God's way result in deterioration. The antidote is the Word of God being preached in all sincerity. There cannot be any "New Community - in Christ" in Asia, without the Word of God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, being preached and accepted. May the Lord give us wisdom to preach the Gospel in such a way

people in Asia understand it.

The pledge: The following hymn is written by Brahmabandhav (= God's friend), a convert from the so-called high caste to the Christian faith. He wrote it in 1898.

All: I bow to Him who is Being, Consciousness and Bliss.  
 I bow to Him whom worldly minds loathe, whom pure minds yearn for, the Supreme abode. He is the Supreme, the Ancient of days, the Transcendent, the Indivisible Plenitude, Immanent yet above all things, Three-fold relation, pure, unrelated knowledge beyond knowledge.  
 I bow to the Father, Son, Supreme Lord, unborn, the seedless seed of the tree of becoming, the cause of all, Creator, Providence, Lord of the Universe.  
 I bow to Him, who is the infinite and perfect Word, the Supreme person begotten, sharing in the Father's nature, Conscious by essence, Jesus Christ.  
 I bow to Him, who proceeds from Being and Consciousness, replete with the breath of perfect bliss, the Purifier, the Swift, the Revealer, the Life-giver.  
 I bow to Him who is Being, Consciousness and Bliss. Amen.

Prayer:

L.: O Holy Spirit, inspire us, so that we may feel you working in our hearts, we may abhor all that you do not like in us and we may be renewed in our minds and hearts.

A.: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

L.: O Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, open our spiritual eyes, so that we, who have gathered here in your name, may see you in our midst, among those who work for social justice and peace in the world, among those who suffer the injustice and the cruelty of the fallen world, and among those who preach the Gospel through word and deed.

A.: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

L.: O our Heavenly Father, whose mercy, power and wisdom have no boundary, who has created us in your image and likeness, who let your Son die on the cross for our sake, who calls us to be your co-workers, place your mighty hands on our heads and bless us, now.

A.: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Amen. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

(I Cor. 3: 9; Ps. 139, 5; Rev. 7: 11)

Lord's Prayer and Benediction.

## Devotions and Bible Studies II

Leader: The grace, the love and the fellowship of the Triune God be with us.

All: Praise the Lord. Amen.

Now thank we all our God  
With hearts and hands and voices,  
Who wonderous things hath done,  
In Whom His world rejoices;  
Who, from our mothers' arms,  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in His grace,  
And guide us when perplex'd,  
And free us from all ills,  
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God  
The Father now be given,  
The Son, and Him Who reigns  
With Them in highest Heaven;  
The one Eternal God  
Whom earth and heav'n adore;  
For thus it was, is now,  
And shall be evermore.

Bible Reading: Rom. 3: 21-30.

Confession of sins:

A.: Have mercy on me. O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that

which is evil in thy sight. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. (from Ps. 51)

L.: The righteous and merciful God grants to us, pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, and also comfort of his Holy Spirit and grace for the sake of the suffering, death and resurrection of his only Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.

Responsive Reading: The dialogue is said antiphonally by two sections of the congregation.

- I. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty.
- II. He was, He is and He is to come. (Rev. 4: 8)
- I. Worthy art thou , our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power.
- II. For thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created. (Rev. 4: 11)
- I. Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by their blood did ransom men for God, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on earth.
- II. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing. (Rev. 5: 9f. 12)
- I. The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come". And let him who hears say, "Come".
- II. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (Rev. 22: 17, 20)

Creed:

L.: God has made us his people through our baptism into Christ Jesus and meets us through his Word and the Holy Communion. We remember and renew this sacred covenant of grace and together confess:

A.: We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Bible Meditation: Rom. 3: 21-30

When we get so much information, we think deeply only about a few things that attract our interest. Thereby we change our attitudes. Sometimes there may not be any reaction in us. One meditates on a matter that attracts ones attention. Too much familiarity breeds contempt. But the more familiar we are with Jesus, the more we long for his love. Our devotion is not to any particular book, but to Jesus Christ. Since the Bible contains the history of our Saviour and also the experiences of the early congregations with the Triune God, we meditate on Bible passages. If a meditation does not lead us to prayer and service to the needy, then it is not a Bible meditation. If a Bible meditation does not strengthen our faith and make us powerful to witness for Jesus through words and deeds, then there must be something wrong with us. Christian meditation does not make us drop-outs of the society who go to the jungle to meditate further, abandoning the tasks given to us for the betterment of the world. The one, who thinks of the good of mankind, is loved by God, for God is the Father of mankind. In meditation it may become clear to us, what God really wants us to do now.

What F.F. Bruce wrote about the Letter of Paul to the Romans is true:

There is no telling what may happen when people begin to read the Epistle to the Romans. What happened to Augustine, Luther, Wesley and Barth launched great spiritual movements which have left their mark in world history. But similar things have happened, much more frequently, to very ordinary people as the words of this Epistle came home to them with power. (1)

Verse 23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This is the factor that unites all people. But many are not conscious of the fact that they are sinners. Most of them have a feeling, that they are better than others in their social behaviour. The great Hindu reformer Vivekananda wrote, "The greatest error is to call a man a weak and miserable sinner". He also said, "Sin is impossible; there is no such thing as human responsibility; man can do no wrong". No wonder that Vivekananda is popular in certain circles both in India and outside India. God's law is the mirror that shows how sinful we are. When one is in a dark room, one cannot see how clean one's clothes are. When the light comes, one sees how unclean they are. The light that comes from Jesus not only shows the

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(1) The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, London, 1963, p.60.

dirt, but also cleans them. Other religions also talk about sin, but sin and its removal are not in the centre of their systems. A community that tolerates evil and co-exists with the sinful structures cannot be a new community in Christ.

Jose Miranda writes:

God will be only in a world of justice, and if Marx does not find him in the Western world it is because he is indeed not there, nor can he be. (2)

There are some preachers, who condemn the evil in the individuals. That is correct. Even though they have the freedom in certain countries, they never dare criticize the governments for crushing the powerless majorities and also the minorities, for strengthening the army, while the poor starve. One of the best contributions of Christianity to the non-Christian world is showing out clearly, what sin is. In India burning widows and the caste system were considered normal social customs for a very long time. Through the light of the Gospel, they are now considered evil. The practice of disposing of one twin as the product of adultery or disposing of both of them as ill-omen has become an event of the past, not because of the influence of godless humanism, but due to the preaching of the Word of God. There are ideologists who take one aspect of evil and condemn it, ignoring other aspects of the same evil. When one form of evil is put down, another form of the same evil appears. As long as we live in this world, we have to be confronted with the problem of sin. There are not two groups, one righteous and another unrighteous. As Paul writes here, all are unrighteous. Those who confess their unrighteousness, understand how miserable they are. Those who do not confess their unrighteousness perish in misery.

This passage contains some of the key words of our Christian faith, such as righteousness and grace of God, faith in Jesus and justification and redemption. This passage contains one of the verses that was quoted often by the nineteenth century missionaries. "Is he not the God of the Gentiles also?" (v. 29) Our God is the God for the non-Christians also. The origin of the universe is not something called "unknown" or "nothing". The origin is God and everything has its origin in Him. The final word for mankind is not death or "nothing" (sunyataa = voidness), and not destruction, but salvation, not judgment, but grace, not status quo, in a sin-infected world, but new life in the New World. Religions like Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism and Islam also refer to the grace of God. Some scholars rightly argue that grace in Christianity is totally different from that of other religions. Saiva Siddhanta is for Saivites,

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(2) Marx and the Bible, Maryknoll, N.Y. Orbis Book, 1975, p. 269.

a powerful sect in Hinduism, what the confessional books are for Lutherans.

Bishop S. Kulandran of Sri Lanka writes:

From a Christian point of view, what Saiva Siddhanta says about grace is irreconcilable not merely with Christianity but with grace itself. (3)

If God is righteous, there is no place for grace, for any act of grace shown to sinners will soil his righteousness. If God is full of grace and lets all sinners go free without punishment, then one will question his justice. The tension between God's righteousness and God's grace was solved on the cross, as God's Son was punished for the sins of mankind, when he identified himself with sinful mankind through his incarnation. Now, the cross is not only the sign of God's righteousness, but also the symbol of God's grace. Thus the grace of God is attested by the justice of God. Now, God can forgive mankind without soiling his righteousness. All the sins that God has forgiven prior to the death of Jesus, were forgiven tacitly on the ground that the Son of God would bear the sins on the cross later (cf. v. 25f. Rev. 13: 8). There are religions that talk about the justice and the mercy of God, but there the justice and mercy remain antithetical. But in Christian faith they are reconciled on the cross, and they are concurrent. Love of God does not annul the justice of God and vice versa. Love without justice is emotional and justice without love lacks clemency. Had God forgiven people without the design of the cross, God would be violating his own moral law. In other words, God, in order to be God, had to send his Son to reconcile justice to grace by dying on the cross. Therefore, the grace of the Christian God is different from the grace of God in other religions. It is this grace that justifies us in spite of our poor faith.

This costly grace is not thrown like pearls before the swine, nor is it forced upon anyone against his desire. It can be received in humility through faith in Jesus. The Northern school of Vaishnavism, a powerful sect in Hinduism, compares God's grace to the mother cat that takes the kitten to the place, where the mother wants it. The Southern school of Vaishnavism compares man to the monkey baby, which clings to the body of its mother and thereby reaches the place, where the mother puts it. If the Northern school were correct, some unbelievers might say: "I am not at fault, for God's grace did not lift me up". If the Southern school were correct, some self-righteous ones might say: "It is my efforts of clinging that saved me, but not the amazing grace". The Christian concept of grace can be compared to the hen calling her brood, "Come and take shelter under my wings". This call is echoed in the proclamation of the

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(3) Grace in Christianity and Hinduism, London, Lutterworth Press 1964, p. 261.

Gospel. If we do not believe in the One, who calls us to take refuge in Him, then self-destruction is sure, just as the disobedient chicken is taken by the kites (cf. Mt. 23: 37).

This passage reiterates the theme, "Salvation through faith in Jesus". What is faith?

Paul Tillich writes:

Faith, for the men of the Old Testament, is the state of being ultimately and unconditionally concerned about Jahweh and about what he represents in demand, threat and promise.... Faith, in the New Testament, is the state of being grasped by the divine Spirit. (4)

Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end (Heb. 12: 2 TEV). We do not have faith in a god, who sits only in heaven, while his children are on earth, but in the God, whose presence is with us. We do not have faith in a god, who demands rituals and pilgrimages (perhaps to foster tourism), but in the God who demands justice and mercy. We cannot earn his grace by fulfilling his demands, but we get his free grace to fulfil his demands spontaneously. Long ago Motoori, the Japanese, said, "It is the quality of the faith that matters; its object may be only a fish's head". Bhakti, i.e. the faith filled with devotion, plays an important role in the lives of the Hindus, but the Hindus seldom care to note whether the object of bhakti is worth worshipping.

Faith in Jesus is the basis for our thinking, speaking and acting. Just as a small child cannot define its mother's love in logical categories, though it knows the immensity of its mother's love, nor can we at times define the faith - relationship with the Triune God, but we understand what it is. Nevertheless, just as one could not hide the joy of one's heart, without expressing it in conversation, faith in God expresses itself in our speech and deeds. If not, there must be something wrong in our faith. Paul writes, "we too believe, and so we speak". (II Cor. 4: 13) We believe in Jesus and therefore we speak about him, whether we are inside the house or outside. We believe in Jesus and therefore we speak about him both to our friends and strangers. We believe that God sent Jesus in this world and therefore we speak of God's love. We believe that Jesus is God's Son and therefore we speak of the power of Jesus. We believe that Jesus infuses in us the desire to serve others and therefore we speak of humanism. We believe that Jesus died for our sins and therefore we speak of redemption. We believe that Jesus rose from the dead and therefore we speak of Eternal Life. We believe in the presence of the Spirit of Jesus in our midst and therefore we speak of rebirth and renewal. We believe that God reconciled the whole world in Jesus

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(4) Dynamics of Faith, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1958, p. 3; p. 71.

and therefore we speak of His great grace to all mankind. Faith has not only to do with our speaking, but also with our doing. Faith in Jesus results in self-sacrifice and in enthusiasm to serve others. Luther, who abhorred the idea of salvation through works, wrote, "Where there are no good works, there is no faith". (5)

Luther writes in his preface to the Letter to Romans:

Faith is a living and unshakeable confidence, a belief in the grace of God so assured that a man would die thousand deaths for its sake.....It is impossible, indeed, to separate heat and light from fire.... Offer up your prayers to God, and ask Him to create faith in you; otherwise, you will always lack faith, no matter how you try to deceive yourself, or what your efforts and ability.

Faith in Jesus implies hope for a New World and love for fellowmen. This makes faith a matter of a "New Community in Christ". True faith leads to action and that action deals with the community. We receive through faith in Jesus the grace of God, not to make us richer and more powerful than our neighbours, but to serve them materially, intellectually and spiritually. It is not the resources we possess that count, but the spirit in us. Grace received is not only a guarantee that we are fit for the community of saints in heaven, but also an incentive to serve the needy and to share with them God's blessings. Grace frees us from our self-centred ambitious projects for further service in Jesus' name and witness to him.

Our faith is the feeble hands that beg God's mercy. God's grace is the mighty hands that shower blessings. Our faith is the bowl. God's grace is the content that is poured in. A small bowl cannot hold much.

I worship the grace, that shows me that I am a sinner.  
 I worship the grace, that leads me to Jesus the Saviour.  
 I worship the grace, that forgives me and sets me free from sin.  
 I worship the grace, that strengthens me to fight against injustice.  
 I worship the grace, that encourages me to think, talk and do good.  
 I worship the grace, that keeps me patient in my sufferings.  
 I worship the grace, that takes me into the communion of saints.

The Pledge: The following is written by H.A. Krishnapillai (1827-1900), who once persecuted the Christians, but later was over-powered by the grace of Christ.

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(5) Luthers Werke, Weimarer Ausgabe 12, 289.

All: Let my heart always think of him,  
Let my head always bow down to him,  
Let my lips always sing his praise,  
Let my hands always worship him,  
Let my body always serve him with love  
Jesus who is seated within my heart, fragrant like a flower.

Intercessions:

Different people need our prayers and also the deeds that come out of our commitment to the Lord.

Let us ask for forgiveness that we did not behave as responsible citizens of the world, and that we did not preach the Gospel as we should have done, and for our part both directly and indirectly in the sins of the community to which we belong.

Let us pray for all who work for justice and peace.

Let us pray for the hungry, thirsty, sick, poor and those, who are imprisoned unjustly by the despots.

Let us pray for all who suffer for their Christian witness through word and deed.

Let us thank God for his grace.

Let us thank the Son for his love.

Let us thank the Holy Spirit for his fellowship.

Lord's Prayer and Benediction.

Rev. Gnanabaranam Johnson

## Devotions and Bible Studies III

Leader: Blessed is the kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now, and for ever.

All: Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power.  
(Lk. 23: 42)

L.: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. (Rev. 19: 9)

A.: Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power.

L.: Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 7: 21)

A.: Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power. Amen.

L.: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

A.: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

A.: A mighty fortress is our God. A bulwark never failing; Our helper He amid the flood, Of mortal ills prevailing; For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe, His craft and power are great, And, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our strength confide, Our striving would be losing; Were not the right man on our side, The man of God's own choosing

Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He, Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle.

That word above all earthly powers, No thanks to them, abideth;

The Spirit and the gifts are ours. Through Him who with us sideth.

Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.

Bible Reading: Rom. 6: 15-23

Responsive Reading:

L.: There was no one worthy to be sacrificed on the altar of the cross as guilt offering for the sins of the whole world, except you, Lord Jesus, for you alone are the unblemished divine Lamb.

A.: So, we come to you to ask for forgiveness of our sins.

L.: We are so tired and frustrated in our fight against the flesh in us, the fallen world outside us and the devil around us. We have no one who can set us free from the bondage of sin.

A.: So, we come to you, in order to be liberated.

L.: Lord, you say, "Come now, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool". (Is. 1: 18)

A.: So, we come to you to be cleansed.

L.: You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (I Cor. 6: 11)

A.: Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev. 1: 5f.)

Bible Meditation: Rom. 6: 15-23

Meditation must be spontaneous. There cannot be any factor that compels one to meditate. The object of our meditation attracts and inspires us to meditate. I pray for you and you pray for me. But I do not know, how I can meditate for you and you can meditate for me. Like every religious experience, each person's meditation is original. In the Bible the thoughts of those, who have meditated have been recorded. Meditation does not provide possibilities to imagine something romantic about God, but to understand what we are in his light. Our knowledge of God is fragmentary or a glimpse caught here and there. But God's instantaneous knowledge of us is complete. Meditation helps us to look into our minds, the way God looks at them. There we know, what the things are that God approves and disapproves of. Meditation is turning the search lights, namely the Word of God to the inside of our soul.

The Psalmist sings:

O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest when

I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar. (Ps. 139: 1f)

This passage helps us to meditate and know whether we are under the domain of sin or grace.

We know Luther's preface to the letter of St. Paul to the Romans has inspired many people including John Wesley. It begins as follows:

This epistle is in truth the most important document in the New Testament, the Gospel in its purest expression. Not only is it well worth a Christian's while to know it word for word by heart, but also to meditate on it day by day. .... The more you probe into it the more precious it becomes, and the better its flavour.

Luther adds that this epistle in essence is a brilliant light, almost enough to illumine the whole Bible. Chapter 6 is one of the important passages in this epistle. Paul talks here about the slavery of sin in verses 16 and 20. It is the worst type of slavery. Man thinks that he is free, but he is bound by sin. Paul also refers to the freedom from sin in verses 18 and 22. Unless one is free from the slavery of sin, one cannot serve righteousness (v. 16 and 18). How can one be free from sin? Is it through meditation and contemplation? No. Is it through rituals and good works? No. Jesus says: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free .... If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed". (Jn. 8: 32, 36) Here, we remember George Matheson's prayer-song:

"Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free;  
Force me to render up my sword, And I shall conqueror be."

Often we talk about the forgiveness of sin, but seldom about freedom from sins. In this passage Paul does not talk about the forgiveness of sins, but the freedom from sin. As long as we live in this world, we can never claim to be entirely free from sin for we still live in the fallen world. That does not give us the liberty to commit sins. Self-liberation from the slavery of sin is absolutely impossible. If so, Christ need not have died for us on the cross. There is no other way to be free from sin than taking refuge in Christ and to surrender to Him.

What a great relief it would have been to the whole world, had all the Christians yielded their bodies up for the service of justice and sanctification, as Paul writes here! What harm was done to the Christian faith, because some of its members never thought of

sanctification. The French Catholic priest J.A. Dubois wrote in the beginning of the 19th century:

.... the conquest of the country by Europeans took place - a disastrous event as far as the advance of Christianity was concerned. Having witnessed the immoral and disorderly conduct of the Europeans who then overran the whole country, the Hindus would hear no more of a religion which appeared to have so little influence over the behaviour of those professing it, and who had been brought up in its tenets. (1)

What Dubois failed to notice was, had the Europeans who came to India at his time not been brought up in the tenets of Christianity, their behaviour would have been still worse. The value of a religion is judged by outsiders not by the dogmas of that religion, but by the behaviour of the votaries of that religion. In India people say, yatha devah, ththa bhaktah. That means, as the deity, so the devotee. The characteristics of the God of one's worship, can be understood by the way of life of the worshipper. If we truly worship Jesus, his characteristics should reflect on our lives.

In this passage Paul talks about sin. What is it? It is defined as "the evil-tolerating state of mind, which is impotent to prevent the series of harmful acts". No religion advocates sin. Except for the last part of the last verse in this chapter, I think our Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim neighbours would accept the content of this passage. It is good to know, what other religions think of our Christian faith and what they think of themselves. They do not think, that they are incomplete systems and that Christianity is the fulfilment of them. They do not think that they are manipulations of the primordial revelation, whereas Christian faith is the final revelation. Each religion considers itself in possession of the whole truth. It is not irrelevant here to find out what other religions say about sin. Which religion says: "You shall murder"? Human sacrifices and the extermination of the "infidels" have become events of the distant past. When all the religions agree on the principle, "You shall not murder", what difference could there be between the religions with regard to this commandment?

An innocent young girl went to the forest to collect firewood for her parents and there she was brutally murdered. The priest of a certain religion explained that the fault lay with the girl herself. She might have killed either her husband or her baby in her previous birth and so she had to be punished. The police officer who did everything to catch the culprit, but without success, comforted himself saying that the murderer would be born as a girl in his next birth and be murdered likewise. The law of karma knows no exception.

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(1) Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936, p. 301.

According to the theory of transmigration of the souls, all the poor did something bad in their previous births and are rightly punished at present. The idea behind this thinking is: justice prevails everywhere and no one suffers unjustly. The illegitimate child of a black soldier in a non-black race, the boy, who was born blind, the unwanted girl-child in a poor family were all sinners in previous births and now they have their legitimate punishment. Have you ever thought, why one man rides comfortably in a rickshaw and another has to draw the rickshaw in the scorching sun or in the monsoon rain? The most admired poet of South India, Tiruvalluvar (2nd cent. A.D.) says: "it is the righteous deeds done in past births that have made the one the rider, and the unrighteous deeds done in his past births that have made the other the bearer, of the palanquin". (2)

Some one explains the murder as if it had happened according to the will of God. It is the fate of the girl. The murderer is nothing but a marionette in the hands of destiny. Who are you to question, what God has destined for everyone?

The Christian will not accept the theory that all sufferers were sinners in their previous births and that therefore justice exists here on earth. For him it is not due to the justice of karma, that some are rich, while others are starving, and one race enjoys privileges, while other races are suppressed. The prophets of the Old Testament shouted against the injustice prevailing in society. Paul refers to the principle of equality (II Cor. 8: 14). The Christian will never agree that all that happens here is according to the will and desire of the holy God.. If so, why should he pray, "Your will be done on earth as in heaven"? He knows that the will of God is not taking place in every incidence of injustice, and therefore he prays that the will of the good God should be done and not the will of the evil ones. The Christian does not explain the murder of the girl as the justice of karma, a result of what the girl is supposed to have done in a previous birth, that does not exist. It is not according to the will of God. It is due to the sin of mankind. It is the sin of society, where bad milieu and unbelief in God produce such evil people. It is the sin of the man, who is not free from it. The Christian meets the parents of the girl and comforts them saying: "Jesus, our Saviour, was also brutally murdered on the cross, but that was not the end. The end was his resurrection. Likewise your daughter will also partake in the resurrection". The Christian message tells the murderer to believe in Jesus and repent of what he has done, and to seek forgiveness and cleansing. Knowing that one has done something wrong and feeling sad is only half-way house. Trust in the Lord and repentance and surrender to the Lord, who sets the sinner free from the slavery of sin is the total entity. For many

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(2) Verse 37 of Tirukural. Trans. V.V. Aiyar.

the demand for repentance is another bitter pill that Christianity offers. If some guru advises to stand upside down and concentrate on the tip of the nose, promising peace, many think it is worth trying. But if an evangelist talks about the freedom from sin and the Saviour, many think that he belongs to the antiquity. Any community that does not take the problem of sin seriously and maintain justice and mercy cannot thrive. Martin Luther King writes in his book, "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?" that both the goal and the method should be noble. If we let the chaos exist in our society there cannot be the New Community.

In this passage Paul writes thrice, that we are slaves of righteousness and once that we are slaves of God. A slave is never expected to be idle. Some people say that they do not believe in God, but nevertheless they seem to work sincerely for the betterment of the society. Such people forfeit the guidance, strength and blessings offered by God. I do not think that God discredits the good they do. The so-called humanists, who hinder others to believe in God are like those, who want the tree to grow and yield fruits, but undermine the roots of the very tree. If there is no inward faith in God, who revealed himself in Jesus, there cannot be any outward signs of real good works. The real good works are the by-product of faith in Jesus. Therefore, unfaithfulness to God is also sin against mankind. Unbelief and distrust in the just and merciful God make one lethargic towards justice and mercy.

God is a generous Employer. Paul writes, "now you have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life" (v. 22). Eternal life in Christ Jesus is not the wages for our "good" works, but a free gift from God (v. 23). We serve God, not as coolies, who expect their wages immediately. Since God has done so much for us in Christ Jesus, out of thankfulness, we offer ourselves to be slaves of God. We have the freedom to serve God willingly. "We are God's fellow-workers" (I Cor. 3: 9). He who brings a sinner back from his errors is a co-worker of God, for God does not want souls to be sick (Jam. 5: 20). He who liberates the poor from their poverty is a co-worker of God, for God does not want his children to wallow in poverty. He who heals the sick is a co-worker of God, for God does not want the body, that he made, to suffer. He who fights against injustice is a co-worker of God, for God does not like the unjust to dominate the world. He who works for peace is a co-worker for God, for God does not like his children to destroy one another. He who makes others happy is a co-worker of God, for God does not want his children to be melancholy. He who preaches the Gospel is a co-worker of God, for God does not want his children to be slaves of the devil.

O Lord, help me to be your co-worker. Amen.

## The Pledge:

All: I take refuge under the mighty wings of the Lord, who created me.  
 I take refuge under the crucified feet of the Lord, who redeems me.  
 I take refuge under the shadow of the Holy Spirit, who renews me.

## Prayer:

In silence we pray for the continuance of God's guidance for our conference.

All: O Holy Spirit, you have called us through the Gospel to our Saviour Jesus. Equip us through your gifts so that we may serve our fellowmen, and preach the Gospel to them.  
 O Jesus Christ, you call us to follow you, whatever the situation may be. Enable us to grow in wisdom and grace before God and people.  
 O our heavenly Father, you call us from many nations to be one big family in Christ Jesus. As we dedicate ourselves to your service and the works of justice and freedom for all, fill our hearts with a deep longing for the spread of your kingdom on earth. Amen.

## Lord's Prayer and Benediction.

## For private reading:

"It is good that our souls should gain their strength from the grace of God, and not from scruples about what we eat..." Heb. 13: 9 NEB).

1. When the soul is sick, reason cannot cure it.
2. When the soul is dirty, good works cannot clean it.
3. When the soul is sad, money cannot make it happy.
4. When the soul is tired, food cannot strengthen it.
5. When the soul is anxious, securities cannot cast out its fear.
6. When the soul is enslaved, self-efforts cannot set it free.
7. When the soul is dead, rituals cannot make it alive.

Lord Jesus, the Lover of souls,  
 Let Your grace cure my soul.  
 Let Your word cleanse my soul.  
 Let Your fellowship bring joy to my soul.  
 Let Your sacred body and blood strengthen my soul.  
 Let Your protection cast away the fears of my soul.  
 Let Your victory on the Cross set my soul free.  
 Let Your touch revive my soul. Amen.

## Devotions and Bible Studies IV

Leader: Thus says the Lord: For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.

All: The former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. (Is. 65: 17)

L.: According to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (II Pet. 3: 13)

A.: I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. (Rev. 21: 1)

L.: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (Gal. 6: 15)

A.: If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. (II Cor. 5: 17)

L.: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

A.: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

A.: All hail the power of Jesus' Name.  
Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
  
Crown Him, ye martyrs of your God,  
Who from His altar call; Extol the Stem of Jesse's rod,  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
  
Ye seed of Israel's chosen race, Ye ransomed of the fall,  
Hail Him who saves you by His grace.  
And crown Him Lord of all.  
  
Let every kindred, every tribe, On this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

Bible Reading: Rom. 12: 1-8

## Confession:

L.: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I Jn. 1: 8f)

A.: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. God, be merciful to me a sinner. (Lk. 15: 21; 18: 13)

L.: The righteous and merciful God grants to us, the heart that truly repents, the desire to be set free from sins, and the tongue that asks forgiveness from those whom we wronged. There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Lk. 15: 10)

A.: (The Gelasian Sacramentary)

Eternal God, the light of the minds that know thee,  
 the joy of the hearts that love thee,  
 the strength of the wills that serve thee,  
 Grant us, so to know thee that we may truly love thee,  
 so to love thee that we may freely serve thee,  
 whom to serve is perfect freedom,  
 to the glory of Thy holy Name. Amen.

## Bible Meditation: Rom. 12: 1-8

The people all over the world meditated in some way or other. "Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening" (Gen. 24: 63). The Psalmist prays: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to they sight" (Ps. 19: 14). Christian meditation is not sinking oneself in trance. Neither is it self-hypnotism or autogen training. Christian meditation is dialogical in its character. The nature around us talks to us about its Creator. The "self" or the conscience talks to us about our relationship with our Creator and our responsibility to the created world. The Saviour talks about the love for mankind. When we meet the Holy Spirit in meditation, our tongues begin to praise the Triune God. Our hands are eager to do what God wants them to do. Our legs are willing to go where God wants us to go. Therefore, meditation should become an important factor of our Christian worship.

In this passage, we meet the new community as the worshipping and serving community. The important key-word for this passage is found in v. 1. It is the word, "therefore".

God has revealed himself in Christ; therefore trust Jesus and follow him.

God has redeemed you in Christ; therefore abandon the idea of work-righteousness.

God has grafted you in the "family tree", called God' folk; therefore do not make artificial distinction among races.

We have been justified through faith; therefore let us continue at peace with God. (Rom. 5: 1)

God shows mercy to all mankind; therefore offer your very selves to him.

God gives his grace to lead a sanctified life; therefore let your life be a witness for Jesus.

The motivation comes from the Triune God and if one does not react properly, there is something wrong with the relationship to God. In v. 1 Paul talks about the bodies being offered as a living sacrifice. In v. 2 he refers to the renewal of the mind. There cannot be any dichotomy between body and mind. What the mind believes should be reflected in the body and its actions. If a person says that he is an ardent vegetarian, but owns a slaughter house and eats beef and pork every day, who is going to believe him? If a person, who says, "I am a sportsman in my mind", spoils his health by smoking and drinking and never turns to the sportsfield even to look at the games, he makes a caricature of himself. A person can not be a Christian in his mind, but behave differently in his body. If our minds are not renewed and transformed and if we do not present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, then we do not have the living faith. The whole being should be Christian. In the spiritual worship the body also takes part. We do not put aside the body in order to elevate the soul, or vice versa.

Worship is a beautiful part of religious experience. It is the response for what God has done to us. This phrase in v. 1 is translated in many ways.

KJV. "your reasonable service"

RSV. "your spiritual worship"

NEB. "the worship offered by mind and heart"

NEB (Margin). "the worship which you, as rational creatures should offer"

TEV. "the true worship that you should offer".

Who is not thrilled to see thousands of Hindus rush before the idols made of stone or copper and then standing there forgetting themselves in ecstasy or enstasy? One can criticise them saying most of them are not worshipping with the still existing outcastes. But

remember, that there are still "churches" where other races are not tolerated. It seems to me, that our non-Christian brothers know about them more than we do. When some people sit in lonely places and meditate deeply closing their eyes, some of us say that they are drop-outs of the society and this is radical escapism, and denial of all responsibility to the society. Often this criticism returns to us as a boomerang. There are non-Christian worships, where the role of the priest or monk is very important or where the language, which is not so familiar with the worshippers is used. The difference between them and us is not qualitative, but only quantitative. When one sees the Muslims worshipping at the hour of prayer, wherever they are, one wonders what motivates them to do so. Some may criticise them because most of them do not allow the women to worship together with the men in the mosques. Do all the churches fully utilise the talents that only women possess in their activities, except such things as decorating the altar or singing in the choir? The most important thing is not the form of worship, but the object of worship. It is not the mode of worship that is significant, but the motivation of worship. God meets me in Christ Jesus, and therefore I cannot but worship. Sermon, liturgy, music and such things are secondary. Praise of the Triune God with fellowmen is the primary thing. The community in Christ is a worshipping community.

What is "spiritual" or "reasonable" worship? The Sunday service starts at about 9 a.m. and lasts for an hour. The participation in this one hour service is only the preparation for the reasonable worship that starts at about 10 a.m. on Sunday and lasts till next Sunday morning 9 a.m. This reasonable service does not take place in church building and there is no priest or liturgy. But both consciously and unconsciously we conduct this "service" by the strength that we gained from the Sunday morning preparation service through the Word of God and the Sacraments, for those who are around us wherever we are. It is worship offered in mind and heart. When we witness Jesus to an unbeliever through words and deed, it is the greatest service done to him. Whether he accepts the message or not, the message is powerful enough in itself to penetrate deep in his mind, even without his acceptance. I have come to this conclusion after meeting people who abused our faith, but later began to praise our faith. When we serve the needy with the means that the Lord has given us, in the name of Jesus, though the help is meagre, this service done is a witness. Our greatest service to the people is the witness that Jesus is the Saviour. Our greatest witness for Jesus is the service done to our fellowmen. This witness and service are the main parts of the reasonable worship that we are expected to conduct on workdays.

We Christians in Asia are a minority community, but we have responsibility for the majority. A committed minority can do more good

than an uncommitted majority. Let us imagine an Asian town where 10,000 people live. There are 100 Christians. They belong to more than three denominations, just as the armed forces are divided into the army, navy etc. When they go to the church, they should assume to be the representatives of those 9,900 before God, pleading for them God's mercy and thanking God for what He does for these 9,900 people. If these 100 worshipping Christians do not include in their worship the 9,900 who are not present, then their worship is a ghetto-worship. The problem of the material, intellectual and spiritual welfare of the 9,900 should also be the problem of the believers. The Christians are not only the representatives of these 9,900 before God, but also representatives of God before the 9,900 non-Christians. According to the Word of God, had there been ten righteous ones in Sodom, it would not have been destroyed. Jesus says that the days of the great tribulation will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones. We Christians, though a minority, can be a blessing for the majority, by being both the representatives of the people before God and at the same time representatives of God before people. Every good Christian prays for the indifferent ones before God and also acts as God's messenger to them. This double representation is also a part of the "reasonable worship".

Verse 4 explains so realistically the unity in Christ. Each member of the body has a different function, but they work in perfect harmony. To prevent blows on the face, the hands come forward immediately and cover the face and are prepared to receive the blows, that the face has to get. While falling down the hands or the legs act so quickly so that the ribs and the head could be prevented from receiving major injuries. The stronger members of the body protect the weaker ones. The head is happy, when the legs run so fast in race and come first. "We, though many, are one in Christ" (v. 5). In the caste oriented society the man-made differences among people are awful. In racism, one finds the horrors of apartheid. In the systems which allow exploitations, the differences between people of different economic backgrounds are as clear as day and night. Even the countries that claim that they have abolished such awful differences among their citizens, exploit very subtly gullible nations, so that workers in their own countries will be better paid. The unity in Christ cannot tolerate that one is overfed at the cost of others, who starve. Verses 7 and 8 exhort us to be a good Samaritan to others. If one cannot be as helpful as the Samaritan, one can at least be as helpful as his "beast", that did its duty in carrying the wounded man to the inn. We often hear that the duty of the modern good Samaritan is not only to do the ambulance service for the wounded, but also to prevent the robbers from operating in the highway between Jerusalem and Jericho. The Lord, who redeemed his neighbour on the cross, demands from his followers, that they preach the Gospel to the modern respected robbers, too. The exploitation of these modern

robbers is well protected by systems, that are approved and respected. All these things come under the reasonable worship that takes place after Sunday service. Are we to leave these problems to the atheists and violent militants? Our worship is no spiritual entertainment. It is a part of the programme of being a new community in Christ. The Church is both a transformed and a transforming community.

The New Community in Christ is not a club, not an association nor even an organisation based on some ideology. It is a fellowship of the believers responding to the call of their Lord and Saviour Jesus, to gather and receive the Word and Sacrament in order to serve effectively the Triune God and their fellowmen in the world. The New Community is called through baptism to participate in the ministry, death, resurrection and glory of the Son of God. One cannot participate without taking into account the misery of the world today and the hope for a New World. The New Community possesses not only the priesthood of all believers, but also includes the prophetic function of all believers and their sharing in the royal glory. Christ restores its saltiness and enlightens it, so that it can be salt and light for the world. The New Community is gathered to pray, praise and thank God; and the New Community is scattered in order to be the Lord's co-workers in different activities in different parts of the world. The relationship between the New Community and the New Humanity is like that of mother and child. The connection between the New Community and the New World is like that of seed and tree. The question is not when and where the New World is going to appear, but the question is whether you are willing to participate in the New World and whether you are eligible for it. The New Community is a redeemed community. It is a confessing community. It is a serving community. Newness implies change. When we say, "New Community in Christ", the accent is not on the words, "New Community", but on the words, "In Christ". In the New Testament the phrase, in Christ, in the Lord and in God appears about 164 times. The fish is a living being as long as it is in the water. Man is a Christian as long as he is in Christ. The community is new as long as it is in Christ.

Lord, lead us from darkness to light.  
Lord, lead us from ignorance to wisdom.  
Lord, lead us from unbelief to faith.  
Lord, lead us from self-centredness to Christ-centredness.  
Lord, lead us from the community outside Christ  
to the New Community in Christ. Amen.

### The Pledge:

All: I pledge loyalty to the Triune God, whose power strengthens me in my weakness.  
 I pledge loyalty to the Triune God, whose grace draws me to himself.  
 I pledge loyalty to the Triune God, whose fellowship demands from me, that I share the blessings that I received from Him with others.

### Prayer:

In silence we thank God for the blessings we received during these days in Singapore. We beg his grace for our safe journey back home and putting into practice all the good things discussed in our conference.

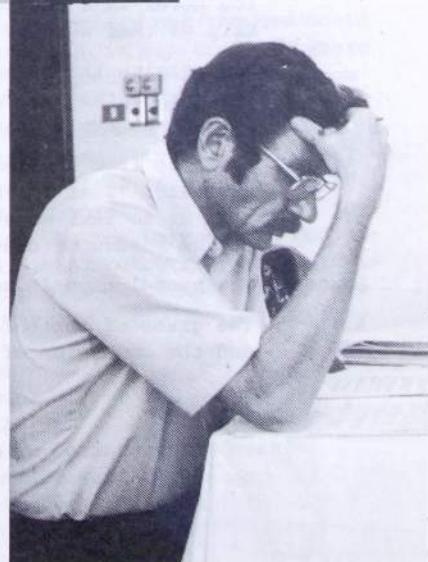
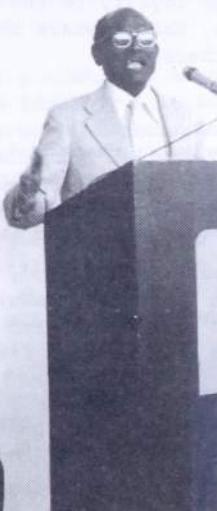
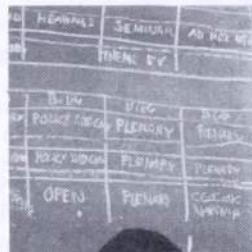
All: Lord Jesus, Son of God, Saviour of mankind,  
 You fed the hungry ones.  
 You had solidarity with them by saying, "I was hungry".  
 Help us that we also feed the hungry ones.  
 You healed the sick.  
 You identified with them by saying, "I was sick".  
 Help us that we also care for the sick ones.  
 You cast out the devils.  
 You never want the devils to overcome.  
 Help us that we give no room for the devils in our society.  
 You forgive the sinners.  
 You desire that we be free from the bondage of sin.  
 Help us to avoid whatever leads to sin.  
 You rose from the dead.  
 You said, "I am the Resurrection and Life".  
 Help us to fear no evil, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Amen.

Leader: The benediction is said by all.

A.: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.

Rev. GnanaBaranam Johnson

Recommendations to the LWF and the Asian member churches are presented by Dr. G. Thomas Edward (India) (at microphone). Dr. Pospos, group secretary, checks his papers.



*A study in concentration as Rev. Maynard Dorow from Korea takes minutes during a plenary session.*

# Effective Proclamation of the Gospel in Asia

This group discussed the paper presented by Dr. Andrew Hsiao on "Effective Proclamation of the Gospel in Asia" and also other related papers of the conference pertaining to this topic. Affirming that proclamation is effective when it is grasped by the power of the Gospel, we agree in principle to the five propositions presented in the paper:

1. Proclamation is effective when it has a definite goal.
2. Proclamation is effective when it stresses the positive.
3. Proclamation is effective when it is used along with other approaches.
4. Proclamation is effective when it is done contextually.
5. Proclamation is effective when it involves the whole church.

Based on the above propositions, we present the following recommendations:

1. Recommended that the Asian Lutheran churches be more goal conscious in their proclamation of the Gospel and that they carefully evaluate their existing programmes in proclamation, training for preaching, Christian education, stewardship, social services, etc. as to their effectiveness.
2. (a) Recommended that the Asian Lutheran churches promote an adequate understanding and appreciation of the religious, political and other experiences of the people among whom they work. While stressing the positive in proclaiming the Gospel to people of other faiths, the churches must exercise their prophetic role by speaking to the issues of sin, corruption, injustice and oppression.  
 (b) Recommended that we ask the APAS of Hong Kong and Taiwan to make an intensive study of ancestor-worship and the APAS of Indonesia to make an intensive study of soul-worship.
3. Recommended that the Asian Lutheran churches evaluate the various approaches they have used in carrying out the mission of the church. In order to proclaim the Gospel more effectively, we request the LWF to give greater assistance to Asian churches in their mass communication and community development programmes.

4. (a) Recommended that the Asian Lutheran churches with the help of the APAS programme make intensive studies of Asian occultism, charismatic movements and counselling programmes, together with the sociological factors with which they are linked.
- (b) Recommended that Asian theological seminaries develop curricula which are relative to their context.
5. Recommended that each Asian Lutheran church have an education office responsible for the planning and implementing of effective lay-leadership training programmes. We request APAS to help with finances and personnel when needed.
6. Recommended that the Lutheran churches of Asia be urged to take the initiative in cooperating with other denominations in carrying out the mission of the church.

# Challenges of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity in Asia

The group discussed the paper "Challenges of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity in Asia" presented by Dr. H. Parkin. It was felt that Christianity is not "Churchianity" nor is it a philosophy but the new life in Christ.

It was agreed that "no matter whether we choose to speak of contact or of communication, or of controversy with ancient faiths, we must recognize that we live and work in the vortex of an unremitting religious, even spiritual, interaction between cultures, religions and ideologies".

It was agreed that our theological colleges should give serious consideration to including courses on ancient faiths in their curricula.

It was agreed that we should recognize the "religious elements in our environment and equip ourselves to teach people how to deal with the religious pressures which bear down upon them at every turn of their daily lives".

The question of modern technology and its threat to Christianity and the natural world was discussed. The group felt that modern technology has both a negative and positive side to it. On the one hand, it was felt that technology could dehumanize and depersonalize, and on the other hand when it is harnessed for good, it is of great value for people's lives and for preserving the natural world for future generations.

The group then considered the following:

1. How does one humanize and personalize life?

The group agreed that the answer to the question was:

- a) to be oneself culturally, racially and nationally;
- b) to acknowledge the self-hood of others;
- c) to take into consideration the cultural characteristics of others before bringing the Gospel to them.

2. Weekly home celebrations.

On this issue, the group did not come to a firm conclusion. It was felt that daily family prayer was good, though under certain circumstances weekly home celebrations may effect a greater Christian impact on the life of the family, the church and the community at large. It was also felt that for psychological reasons, weekly home celebrations are very effective compared to daily prayers.

3. What is required for a Christian to lead a simple form life?

The question of "renunciation" and "stewardship" was discussed. It was felt that a simple life style does not mean to live in poverty.

4. What kind of a society do we want to build?

It was agreed that it should be a practicable and a realistic one, where the individuals engage themselves in a prophetic role, especially in regard to technology.

5. Personnel standards, values, acceptances and a code of spirituality.

Every one needs goals for family life and society which, in turn, will depend on personal standards, cultural and values and acceptances and a code of spirituality. The demonstration of Christian goals in this regard will pose a positive challenge to the ancient faiths.

Let not people say that Christians are hypocrites as Ghandiji once said, "I like Christ but not Christians".

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the churches take seriously the ancient faiths, new religious movements and modern ideologies and that they pursue in-depth studies of them in their seminaries and through seminars and consultations.
2. That the churches study the effects of modern technology on their respective societies and seek ways for meeting the problems arising from modern technology.
3. That we request the LWF to commission a group of qualified people to draw up a vocabulary and list of concepts drawn from the theologies and practices of the ancient faiths with an attempt to fill them with Christian meaning.

# Social and Political Challenges to the Churches in Asia

1. This Third All Asia Lutheran Conference recognizes the existence of social ills in all countries of the world, but also notes that the nature and seriousness of the problems vary from country to country, and between regions within countries. Among problems recognized are those of poverty, social justice, loss of human dignity and curtailment or loss of human rights.
2. This conference applauds the efforts of those governments and agencies which strive to eliminate from their areas of jurisdiction any and all practices and situations which prevent their people from becoming the full human beings God would have them become.
3. Jesus Christ provided food for the hungry, restored sight to the blind, gave new hope and purpose to the ostracized and called his disciples to follow in his steps.

## RECOMMENDATION ONE

That member churches act wherever possible to alleviate human distress and suffering irrespective of race, creed, nationality or political convictions and further that the churches consider the possibility when performing this action of doing so with Government or with other churches or with other religions. We recognize that LWF member churches do act together to alleviate need through the Department of World Service of LWF.

4. In some instances, political structures or people in seats of authority are responsible for suppressing the rights of country's citizens or for favouring the monied class over against the poor, to name but two examples of unacceptable practice.

## RECOMMENDATION TWO

That member churches recognize the duty, out of love for the disadvantaged ones, to proclaim the truth to the end that justice, dignity and physical well-being are attained. In discharging this duty, member churches may request the support and assistance of the Lutheran World Federation.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATION THREE

That member churches, corporately and through their individual members, recall that performing deeds of love and kindness to a neighbour, friend or foe, is the most practical way of exhibiting Christ's love. Examples of action are homes for the aged, pre-schools, hospitals and clinics, vocational schools, student hostels, industrial education programmes, agricultural development, economic assistance, social services.

6. While Christ's message and example may be lived out in many ways, including the struggle in the name of Christ to raise to new dignity people who are disadvantaged economically, politically or legally, nevertheless the life which Jesus gives in all its fullness is complete only when salvation is proclaimed, sinfulness admitted and the Saviour accepted. The church is the steward of this Gospel message of God present here in Christ, of Him crucified, risen and alive for ever, the Saviour of human kind.

#### RECOMMENDATION FOUR

That member churches maintain as their first priority the effective proclamation of the life-giving Gospel message.

#### 7. RECOMMENDATION FIVE

That member churches, while hearing and responding to the call to action through proclamation and through service to the needy, make a careful examination of their priorities for action in the light of God's Word, that they be steadfast and courageous in the face of unjust persecution, that they be constant in prayer and be diligent in the teaching of the faith in the context of the home, all to the glorification of our Triune God.

# Self Reliance or Creative Discipleship

The group discussion focused especially on the paper "Self-Reliance for Mission or Creative discipleship" by Dr. P. Prabhudas and the reactions presented by Drs. Y. Ishida and P.L.R. Pospos. Reference was made also to "Self-reliance for Mission" prepared by Dr.K.Rajaratnam and the Interdepartmental Task Force on Self-reliance for Mission.

## I. The Meaning of Self-reliance

Because the term "self-reliance" raises various difficulties, the group's discussion of the meaning of the term is here recorded.

Self-reliance means to appropriate the Gospel for ourselves and to involve all of God's people in the mission of the church. In other words, it means responsible participation in mission with the entire church. Self-reliance means self-renewal, not only self-consolidation. Therefore, self-reliance is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic process.

From another view point the term self-reliance should be understood as standing on one's own feet, but it does not preclude the sharing of resources among churches. In this regard, churches receiving assistance should have freedom to use the resources according to their own priorities.

## II. Recommendation

1. The term "self-reliance" results in ambiguities, especially in describing the church's mission. However, in our historical circumstances it has assumed a particular significance in relation to the maturation of churches and to inter-church relationships.

We therefore recommend:

- a) that the conference accept the following definitions as useful guides: self-reliance means that the church really be the church, that is, God's people fully rooted in their own place, participating responsibly in mission and inter-dependent with all churches in the world.

Self-reliance is the continuous development towards a church life which is fully reliant on God's grace, lived out in proclamation, witness and service in responsible interdependence with other churches of the world.

- b) that the churches in Asia promote the positive aspects of "self-reliance" especially in developing and utilizing resources available to the churches for their mission.
- c) that the forthcoming LWF Assembly take up the matter of "self-reliance for mission" as a major agenda item (see page 147 of this report for "Self Reliance for Mission")
- d) that the Department of Church Cooperation of LWF circulate among the churches for study the document "Self-reliance for Mission" prepared by K.Rajaratnam and the Interdepartmental Task Force.

2. We recommend that the proposed study of mission by the Lutheran churches of Asia give particular attention to the pooling of resources, both financial and personnel, among the churches of Asia.
3. We recommend that the churches make maximum use of the LWF consultative service on self-studies in order to promote self-renewal, to re-examine the structures of the church for mission and ministry, to mobilize all available resources of culture, finance and personnel and to assure fuller participation by women and youth.
4. We recommend that in the spirit of self-reliance expressed in point I of this report, the Lutheran churches of Asia start or increase their financial contribution towards the needs of the Lutheran churches of the world through the annual LWF statement of needs.

# Regional (Asia) and Global Partnership for Mission in Asia

The group had three papers to consider namely:

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR MISSION IN ASIA  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CCC MANDATE  
LWF/NORTH-SOUTHEAST ASIA LUTHERAN CHURCH LEADERS  
CONSULTATION RESOLUTIONS.

After discussion, the group arrived at the following recommendations:

## RECOMMENDATION ONE

That a thorough study of the meaning of mission in regard to both theology and practice be carried out. The study will give attention to potential joint mission strategy in Asia, our global mission responsibility, mission among ethnic Asian groups abroad and the impact of Asian religions upon churches in both the East and the West. The study will be carried out as follows:

- a) The following committee prepare a detailed plan for the Seminar on Mission and be responsible for its organisation.
  1. Dr. Andrew Chiu
  2. Dr. F. H. Sianipar
  3. Asia Secretary (Convener)
- b) Hold regional seminars during 1977 for local input, using the APAS structure.
- c) Hold an ALL Asia Mission Seminar in 1978 to assimilate the results of the study and to propose plans and projects for mission by churches individually and jointly, and the Department of Church Cooperation of LWF be requested to make financial provision for this seminar.

## RECOMMENDATION TWO

That the All Asia APAS Consultation be used for the study of Asian religions, ideologies, ancestor worship and pseudo-Christian sects which are of special concern to the churches as they pursue their mission.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

That we endorse the resolution of the Manila consultation that:

- a) the assistance of the LWF be solicited in the preparation of a directory of Asian Lutheran leaders, specialists and other important data for the purpose of information and personnel exchange.
- b) the LWF Asia Secretary to be requested to find suitable person(s) to prepare the directory.
- c) the CCC be approached for necessary funding through the 1978 budget.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

That in principle regular meetings of Asian Lutheran churches be held as follows and that the Department of Church Cooperation of LWF be requested to provide financial assistance for regional and All Asia meetings:

Local (normally one country, using the APAS structure)	Once every 2 years
Regional (North Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia)	Once every 4 years
All Asia	Once every 6 years.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

That the LWF China Study Programme be continued but with the participation of the Chinese Lutheran churches and other concerned churches in Asia, with the purpose of advancing the mission of the church among the Chinese within and outside (overseas) the mainland of China.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

- a) That this conference endorse the request made by the Hong Kong-Taiwan group that the LWF through the Asia Secretary of the DCC facilitate a special meeting of the leaders of the Lutheran churches of Hong Kong and Taiwan for the purpose of encouraging interaction among the Lutheran churches in this region.
- b) That in general the All Asia Lutheran Conference requests the LWF through its Asia Secretary to initiate, encourage and strengthen close cooperation between Lutheran churches, especially on the national and sub-regional levels.

#### RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

That production, publication and exchange of literature prepared and written by Asian Christians in the Asian context be encouraged to enhance contextual spirituality and that whenever necessary the LWF be called upon for assistants in translating and/or publishing of these materials.

#### RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

We recommend that this Conference express the readiness of the Asian churches to assist the churches in the West, in Africa and in other places in their mission situation with special reference to the rapid growth of ancient Asian religions and religious movements in their efforts in carrying out mission work among minority ethnic groups.

#### RECOMMENDATION NINE

We recommend to the Conference that it wholeheartedly endorse the report of the CCC Mandate Committee (see page 206) with the understanding that the following basic principles are respected:

- a) There should be equality and full participation of all the member churches of the LWF in the decision-making process for mutual assistance.
- b) The priorities of all assistance programmes need to be determined from within the context of the churches concerned.
- c) All resources of churches belong to God and are therefore placed at the disposal of the whole church and need to be shared on the basis of joint decisions.

We further recommend that with respect to point (2), (this report p.209) Saskatoon report in case of conflicts between member churches, the LWF could be called upon for mediation.

In the implementation of Recommendation III of the Saskatoon report, we agree that as far as regular consultations in Asia are concerned, the timetable of the resolution of the Manila Church Leaders' Consultation of October 1976 be followed, as reported in Recommendation IV of this report.

For special consultation in Asia, we envision such consultations as mentioned in Resolution 3 of the Manila Consultation, as described in Recommendation I and II above.

# Asia Information-Sharing Newsletter

We recommend that the following proposals be adopted for establishing and launching the proposed monthly Asian Lutheran Newsletter, retaining this name.

- a) That we follow Option 3 of the proposal put forward by Rev. Anders Hansen. The newsletter will be the type of publication aimed at gathering and sharing information about the mission task of the church dealt with as news items rather than as studies and reports.
- b) That Format 2 be adopted whereby a mimeographed news service type of information sheet intended for news multipliers who would probably translate it for their respective periodicals in their churches.
- c) The choice of the second format has the advantage that airmailed copies of the newsletter could reach the editors and key persons quickly and be reproduced in the local church press before the information gets stale. The limited costs would also be an advantage.
- d) The content of the newsletter would include happenings in the church of interest to other churches in the area, announcements of church events that are of regional importance, human interest stories, life and development of churches, personality sketches, achievements of churches and of individuals in their mission tasks, new publications and books by church leaders and Asian religious writers, visits of church leaders to other countries, reports on conferences, seminars and other matters of regional interest.
- e) Distribution to: All pastors and evangelists who read English, all missionaries associated with churches in the region, all theological seminaries and faculties and libraries in the region, periodical rooms in churches related to middle schools, all publication houses and welfare agencies of churches, all news and evangelism agencies of Asian and Western churches, selected secular and religious news/feature and daily services in Asia and the West.

The success or failure of the venture depends in large part upon the effectiveness with which the multipliers translate and transmit the information and news items that they judge to be of general news value and of help and inspiration to their churches.

f) Circulation is planned initially for the printing of 1,500 to 2,000 copies per month.

We recommend that the newsletter be put on a 2 year trial basis beginning from early 1977 with the base of printing operations to be in Hong Kong.

g) That an editorial board be appointed consisting of Dr. Andrew Chiu, Editor, Rev. A. Hansen, Managing Editor and Mr. Rajan Moses, professional journalist, Kuala Lumpur; ex officio members: DCC Asia Secretary, the LWF OC representative. A number of regional correspondents be immediately recruited. It was recommended also that the committee people be geographically close so that it will not be difficult to meet.

h) It was also recommended that Rev. Anders Hansen of Hong Kong be appointed as the Managing Editor of the newsletter for a period of 10 months while the editorial board looks for another person (an Asian) to take over. Dr. Andrew Chiu will serve as Editor.

i) Funds for the kicking off of this newsletter would initially be received from the Hong Kong Lutheran churches which have volunteered to foot initial expenses. At later stages funds could be received from the LWF and other Asian churches on a cost sharing basis.

# Lutheranism in the Context of Ecumenism in Asia

## I. We recommend:

that all the churches in Asia be encouraged to engage in or continue in a process of self-study to determine what elements in their church's life make them distinctively Lutheran. The purpose of such self-studies would be:

- a) to relate that which is distinctively Lutheran to specific ecumenical activities and programmes in Asia;
- b) to concentrate on the further development of ecumenical education, communication and publication programmes;
- c) to relate distinctively Lutheran theological bases to task of social involvement carried out in co-operation with other Christian churches, with emphasis on the demands of social and special reference to the needs of rural, agrarian communities;
- d) to explore the possibility of developing faculty and student exchange programmes among the different Asian theological schools.

## II. We recommend to our Asian churches

that in order to facilitate ecumenical work in Asia, they consider promoting study and training programmes in the English language wherever practicable.

### III. We recommend to our Asian churches

that in ongoing studies on Lutheranism and ecumenism the results of the following LWF studies be taken into account:

- a) The "Ecclesiology Study" of the Department of Studies;
- b) The "Lutheran Identity" study of the Strasbourg Institute;
- c) The LWF documents emerging from the International Consultation on Ecumenical Methodology; and
- d) The report of the Executive Committee's working group on the Interrelations among the various bilateral Dialogues. (Special emphasis to be given to the study of the nature of the unity we seek).
- e) We further recommend to our Asian churches that they study working models of ecumenism already existing in Asia.

# Recommendations to the LWF and to the Member Churches in Asia

## I. Issues of crucial concern to Asia to be included in the Assembly agenda:

1. Mission of the church in Asia: meaning of and strategy for mission against the background of the Asian social political and religious situation.
2. Lutheranism in Asia in the context of Ecumenism. New Lutheran ecumenical models in Asia.
3. Social justice and human rights.
4. Self-reliance for mission which is recommended to be a major concern in the Assembly for policy recommendation.
5. The proper understanding of ancient faiths of Asia for effective proclamation of Gospel.
6. Modern technology: its threat to the Christian way of life, the family, the society and the environment.

## II. How to prepare for the Assembly:

1. Member churches be aided in the translation of the English Bible study outlines for preparation at the congregational level.
2. Member churches are requested to pray regularly for the Assembly, the preparation for it, the work of the Assembly and its conclusions, so that they may be a blessing to the participants and the member churches.

## III. What we expect from the Assembly:

Asian member churches hope to receive inspiration for continuing the missionary task of the churches in Asia and elsewhere. For that purpose follow-up programmes should be drawn up by the churches in Asia and the DCC using assistance for continuing education in 1978 as necessary.

#### IV. What we can contribute to the LWF:

1. Seek to establish closer fellowship with the churches of Africa and Latin America, fostering the exchange of visits and workers under regular programmes.
2. Make financial and personnel contributions to the needs of the LWF member churches, even in a small way, through the LWF Statement of Needs.
3. Establish closer relationships among churches in Asia through joint programmes of mission, visitation and training of pastors and laymen.
4. Create an advisory liaison structure which could advise LWF on all Asia programmes and projects, such as the Asian Newsletter, consultations, etc. and which could also be of help to the Asia Secretary in the LWF work in Asia.

The Asia Secretary is requested to bring specific proposals to the next CCC meeting.

5. Foster more leadership participation of Asian churches in the life of LWF. It is recommended to the Executive Committee of the LWF to plan the leadership pattern of the LWF at and after Dar-Es-Salaam, to visibly reflect substantial leadership participation of AALA churches at all levels of LWF structure. The fact that the WCC has given this kind of lead from its inception should be noted. Asian leadership participation should be noted. Asian leadership participation in the Executive Committee, Commissions, Committees and staff must be increased, and membership in these committees must be equitably distributed among different regions of Asia. Natural and recognized leaders who enjoy the express confidence of the Asian churches should be elected to these positions.

#### V. Decision making process at the Assembly:

1. The Asia Secretary is requested to send the study materials and other reports on the work of LWF during the last six years to select delegates to the Assembly in different churches of Asia, who are specialized in particular areas, so as to make a more effective contribution to the discussions at the Assembly.
2. We request that facilities be provided during the Assembly sessions for AALA delegates to hold consultations on matters of mutual concern.

#### VI. Suggestions for operational cooperation of LWF with member churches:

1. DCC is requested to establish a youth desk to promote youth participation in the life of the churches and facilities for leadership training. It is also requested that the LWF invite more youths to the Assembly.
2. DCC is requested to have a women's desk headed by an Asian woman.
3. Consultative service of the LWF must be rooted through the churches without separating any segment of the congregation (men, women and youth) from the total life of the church and its administration.
4. Asian youth and women's work, their programmes and exposures should be planned and conducted within the framework of Asian cultural settings values and therefore should be planned by Asian leaders.

# On the Role of Women

The women delegates (from Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore) had a brief meeting together to examine the situation of women's work in their respective churches and to discuss ways to generate participation in all areas of church life. We realized that in order to encourage and prepare women for better use of their abilities and to bring them to full awareness and development of their potential, it is necessary that women's role in the church be made fully explicit to all its members, clergy and lay, young and old, through education, leadership training, biblical studies concerning the matter, stewardship training, etc. It is with this understanding that we make the following recommendations on the local (national) level.

1. We recommend that the churches develop educational programme which set forth the biblical grounds for women's involvement in the entire mission of the church and which foster women's self awareness and self-confidence as instruments of God in His mission.
2. We recommend that the churches make it a policy to encourage women's full participation and contribution to the mission, especially mission at home.
3. We recommend that the churches employ full-time trained and qualified women's secretaries to be in charge of work with women in the church, such as organizing and conducting leadership training courses, etc.

On the regional (Asia) level.

4. We recommend to this Conference that through the LWF a consultation/seminar be organized once every two years for Asian Lutheran women exchange of experiences and for training.

# On the Role of Youth

The following is a report of the discussion for better youth participation in their respective churches.

## I. Recommendation to the churches

The group felt that:

1. Local churches should provide sufficient opportunities for the youth to participate in the various activities of the church, e.g. evangelistic programmes.
2. The churches should see to it that youth prayer groups in the respective congregations be given guidance by the pastor.
3. The churches should initiate special part time/full time courses in seminaries for youth to prepare them for fuller participation in the church, social work/service etc.
4. The churches should make greater efforts to inform their youth regarding LWF programmes which provide for study scholarship, personnel exchange and leadership training, and to assist them in making the fullest possible use of these programmes.
5. The churches should appoint a full-time youth adviser or director to look after the needs of the youth concerned at the congregational level.
6. Youths should be given the opportunity to participate in national church organizations.

## II. Recommendation to the youth

The group felt that:

1. The youth organization in the churches should try to become self-reliant financially by organizing fund raising campaigns, etc.

## Effective Proclamation of the Gospel

2. The youth should reorganize themselves and hold rallies and other programmes suited to their needs.
3. The group called for youth leaders to be in constant contact with each other so that they are aware of the latest activities in the churches in Asia.

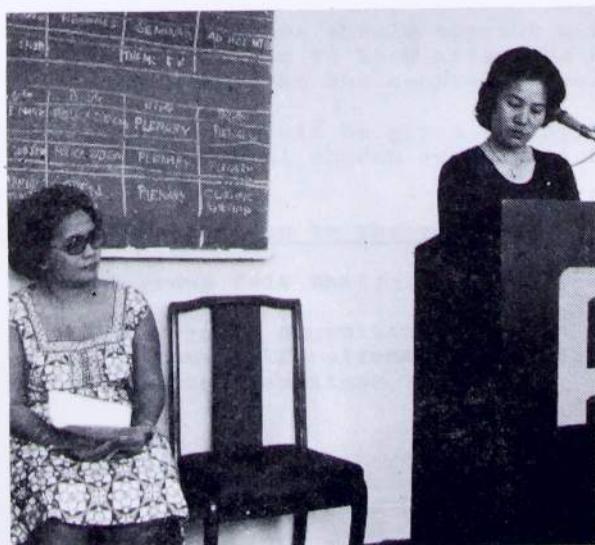
### III. Requests from the youth to the LWF

1. That the number of youth representatives to the 1977 LWF Assembly in Tanzania be increased.
2. That LWF and the Asia Secretary help to organize an Asian youth seminar for leadership training and consultation and also to study the question of youth organizations in Asia by 1978.
3. That a youth office/department be set up in the LWF to look after all youth needs and activities in Asia/World.

"The Role of Youth" (see page 64) is explained by Miss Jeyanthi Nathan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore. Seated is Mr. Uttam Kumar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh.



Mrs. Martha Mamora (left) from Indonesia, and Mrs. Rita Wang from Hong Kong were two of the twelve female participants at the Singapore Conference. The statement "On the Role of Women" appears on page 63.



# Effective Proclamation of the Gospel in Asia

In 1974, when the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong celebrated the twentieth anniversary of her organization, "Evangelism" was chosen as the theme for the year-long anniversary celebration. Last year, when Billy Graham's Evangelistic Crusade was held in Hong Kong, support for the crusade was given by nearly all the denominations, a record in Hong Kong's church history for cooperation in the proclamation of the Gospel. In a recent survey conducted by a group of young people in Hong Kong, it was found that a major criticism by youth of Christian pastors was that they did not know how to meet the needs of young people in their preaching -- that their proclamation of the Gospel was not effective. These and other instances which we could cite out that, in spite of the rapid changes that have taken place both in society and in the churches in Hong Kong in recent years, proclamation of the Gospel is still the main concern of the churches and the Christians in Hong Kong.

I do not think that this situation is unique to Hong Kong. I believe that if a poll were taken today among the younger churches in Asia to determine what their main concerns are, proclamation of the Gospel would stand at the top of the list. This belief is based on the fact that Asian churches are fully aware that Asia has a larger number of people who have not yet heard the Gospel than any other continent.

Yet the proclamation of the Gospel was begun in Asia where in the Mideast the church was born nearly two thousand years ago. Asia has been the target for more mission effort than any other part of the world. India was the first objective of the modern missionary movement. China became the world's largest mission field prior to the Second World War. Why, then, is Asia the least Christianized continent in the world today? This question should remind Asian church leaders that they need to be concerned not only about proclaiming the Gospel more effectively.

How can the Gospel be proclaimed effectively in an Asian setting? I am sure that this is a subject in which we are all interested. In our presentation I should like to state five propositions for your consideration. These will be followed in turn by number of related questions for your discussion.

### I. Proclamation is effective when it has a definite goal

One of the most prevalent misunderstandings in mission and church circles today is the belief that the proclamation of the Gospel is the mission of the church.

Proclamation is not the mission of the church. It is only one of the approaches in carrying out the mission of the church, namely, making all people everywhere the disciples of Christ. In other words, proclamation is not the goal of the church, but a means to achieve her goal. As long as the church regards proclamation as her mission, she will easily feel satisfied once she has proclaimed the Word, and will stop to ask whether her proclamation has been effective.

I know a missionary in Hong Kong who seems to be unusually enthusiastic about bringing the Gospel to all the people he can. Wherever he goes, whether on bus or train; wherever he is in a store or market or train station, he is busy pressing gospel tracts into the hands of everyone he meets. I have admired him very much for his faithfulness and courage. One day while passing a market where he was busy passing out tracts, I paused and then walked along some distance behind him. As I walked, I picked up a number of tracts which had been thrown away by those who had just received them. When I began to read them, I blushed and felt terribly embarrassed, because these were some of the worst printed Christian materials that could be found in Hong Kong. Both the paper and the printing were so bad that I was reminded immediately of the books I had used in school during the Second World War when good paper and printing were unobtainable. The pictures used were so ugly that I felt sick when I looked at them. The message of the tract was so poorly written that it was next to impossible to understand what the author meant. In one tract I found that eight of the some thirty words that were used were either an incorrect Chinese character, or an incorrect use of the character. As a former editor for the Lutheran Taoosheng Publishing House in Hong Kong, I could not but ask myself where on earth this missionary had purchased or had printed these useless materials. How could anyone be interested in reading them?

It seems to me that this missionary believed that all he needed to do to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ was to pass out these tracts. He need not concern himself with whether the people read them, whether anyone who read them would be able to understand them and be led to know Jesus Christ - in other words, whether they were effective or not. Since his goal was only to pass out a certain number of tracts, and when he had finished passing them out, he could be satisfied and say to God that he had carried out the mission given to him.

I know a young Chinese student who was asked to join a youth caravan one summer to promote world mission in the U.S. Since he was the only overseas student in the group, he was asked to be the speaker for the group. As they travelled continuously, he was able to use the same talk over and over again, and he memorized each word of the talk which he had prepared. Yet before each meeting he insisted on spending a couple of hours in meditation and in going over his talk. When asked why he did this, he said that he believed that God had a definite task for him to carry out in each meeting. This might be the only opportunity he had to reach some person who had come to the meeting. Therefore he wanted to dedicate himself to God anew so that God's Word could reach the audience through him and God's will could be accomplished. Maybe this young Chinese student took his role a bit too seriously, but he was right in thinking that he had a definite purpose to achieve whenever he had an opportunity to preach the Word of God.

If the churches in Asia really understand that proclamation is not the end but a means to achieve their ultimate goal of making disciples of all nations, then they will be willing to try harder to proclaim the Gospel in the most effective way possible.

Question for discussion:

1. How can we help Asian church leaders to be more goal conscious in their proclamation?
2. How can we assist Asian churches or congregations to set up goals that are realistic and challenging in their evangelism programme?
3. What precaution should be taken to avoid possible meddling on our part with the work of the Holy Spirit as we seek to carry out our programmes of evangelism?

## II. Proclamation is effective when it stresses the positive

Last year the faculty and student body of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong visited a famous Buddhist temple. During their 24 hour stay there, they had the opportunity for a first hand study of the faith and life of the Buddhists by sharing their dining table, observing their services and by attending special lectures on Buddhism. The chief priest, who gave the lectures, made several remarks about the ignorance of Buddhism on the part of Christian preachers. He said he could not help but laugh when Christian missionaries and preachers attacked Buddhism as polytheistic or pantheistic. Buddhism, he said, is in fact atheistic, a religion which worships no god.

His remarks have confirmed a conviction I have had for years. In proclaiming the Gospel, it is much more important and effective to stress the positive than the negative, especially

when preaching the Gospel to people of other religions in Asia. The most important thing in preaching the Gospel is not to criticize or attack what other people believe, but to proclaim as clearly as possible what we as Christians believe. Reasons for this conviction are easily understood. On the one hand, our understanding of other religions is usually so limited that we are not qualified to criticize. On the other hand, the power that saves people lies not in what we say about other religions, but in the Gospel of God we preach as St. Paul stresses in Romans 1:16.

At the end of 1948, the Lutheran Theological Seminary in China moved from central China to Hong Kong because of the political turmoil in the area. I was one of the seminary students at that time. For several years after arriving in Hong Kong, our Seminary made its home at Taofungshan, the centre for Christian Mission to Buddhists. Here we had an opportunity to contact many Buddhist monks and nuns. I was in charge of the evangelism programme of the student body at that time. One day I appealed to my fellow students to launch an evangelism campaign to reach the twelve monks who were staying at the centre. Twelve students responded. The evening before the campaign was to be launched, we prayed together and discussed what approaches and strategies we should use. One of the first things we decided was that we would not criticize Buddhism or argue with the monks on issues related to other religions. We would show them what we Christians believed in word and action. A few months later, all the monks who stayed on in the center accepted Christ. Today several of them are pastors in our church, including one who is serving in the Lutheran Church in America in a parish in the United States.

I often ask myself what would have happened if we had taken a negative approach and attacked what the Buddhist monks believed? I am quite certain we would not have seen the results in the conversion of the monks, and our whole evangelistic effort would have been a waste of time.

I am not saying that we should ignore altogether what other people believe, nor am I saying that we should just preach what we ourselves believe without taking into account their religious background. On the contrary, I believe that an understanding of people's religious, cultural and political experiences are a must in proclaiming the Gospel effectively. However, understanding a person's religious belief is one thing, but attacking and criticizing it is quite another thing.

Questions for discussions:

1. How can we help the Asian churches to have an adequate understanding and appreciation of religious, political and other experiences of the people among whom they work?
2. How can we determine which teachings, practices and facts in Christianity are most appealing to people of different beliefs and ideologies?
3. What guidelines should be given to Asian church workers as they seek to bring the Gospel to people of different beliefs and political ideologies in a positive manner?

III. Proclamation is effective when it is used along with other approaches

Proclamation is the basic means or approach an carrying out the mission of the church. It is the simplest, the most convenient, the most economical and the most direct way of introducing Christ to people, and in bringing people to Christ. But proclamation can also be the least effective means of witnessing for Christ. Sometimes proclamation may be unattractive even to those who like to hear the preaching of the Gospel. At other times, proclamation is too abstract and the hearers do not understand what it intends to communicate. Proclamation can be more effective when it is used along whith other proper means and methods such as education, service, seeking for social justice and others.

In countries where the government is unable to provide an adequate education for its people, education may be used to prepare for and strengthen the proclamation of the Gospel. In areas where there is not enough food, where cloth and clothing are inadequate, the Gospel which the church proclaims will seem unreal unless it is accompanied by social service programmes. In Communities where racial segregation, political corruption, class discrimination, religious persecution and other similar problems are the concern of the people, the church has an obligation to speak for social justice in the Name of Christ who is all loving and perfectly just so that the Gospel can be more explicit.

We have heard enough about the controversies which have disturbed mission circles in recent years as to proclamation or development, the soul or the body, the spiritual or the social should be our concern. I think the real question is not one or the other. but which one or which ones are most effective in carrying out our mission in a given situation. The chinese have a saying, "It is not the black cat or the white cat which is good, but the one which catches rats".

Proclamation is mere words if Jesus cannot be heard, just as social service is only "busy-work" if Christ is not seen. Experience tells us that when various methods are used together properly, then witness for Christ tends to be most effective.

Questions for discussion:

1. Time has come for Asian churches to ask themselves the question: What success has there been in the various approaches used in the past in carrying out the mission of the church?
2. What other or new approaches, methods or means should be employed to make the Gospel witness more effective?
3. Where can we find sufficient resources in terms of both finances and personnel for the various approaches the church may wish to use?

IV. Proclamation is effective when it is done contextually

Though Christianity has its roots in Asia, today it seems to be much more foreign to Asians than the people of the West. One reason is that the Gospel has been colored by Western culture.

There is nothing wrong with the Gospel wearing a cultural overcoat as it does today in the West. On the contrary, this is the very essence of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Jesus came into the world at a specific point in human history. The language he spoke, the clothes he wore, the food he ate, the customs he observed were all in line with the culture of that time so that people could better understand what He said, and more easily accept Him. If the Gospel is to be understood properly and accepted easily, it is important that it be proclaimed in accord with the needs of the culture of the area. In other words, proclamation has to be contextual if it is to be effective.

One serious problem for the Asia churches is that the Gospel is so heavily mixed with Western culture that it is not easy for either the Asian Christian or even the missionary to distinguish between the intrinsic message of the Gospel and the interpretations given it by western culture. In order to be faithful to their understanding of the Christian faith, missionaries may unconsciously preach a Westernized Gospel, while Asian Christians, not caring to question the missionary, may accept it without reservation. Sometimes this Christianity with its cultural overtones is good for Asian Christians, while at other times it may cause unnecessary problems for them and hinder the growth of the church.

When I was a little boy in one of the southern provinces of China, I was told that both smoking and drinking were socially acceptable for Christians, but that playing cards was not proper. Some years later I attended the Lutheran Theological Seminary where most of the students came from the north of China. I discovered that both smoking and drinking were condemned by them as evil, but that playing cards was accepted as a common way of passing time. I was somewhat confused until I learned that many of the Scandinavian missionaries who worked in the south were accustomed to and fond of smoking cigarettes and taking a drink from time to time. Many of the American missionaries who worked in the north enjoyed playing cards at family or social gatherings. No wonder one church worker once complained that he did not know to answer when he was asked by a group of young people whether smoking and drinking were anti-Christian.

Dr. Chien Moh, the noted Chinese historian, once attributed the failure of Christianity in China to its opposition to ancestor worship. While I do not agree with Dr. Chien's statement that Christianity failed in China, I do believe that ancestor worship, one of the most treasured cultural and social practices in China, was never properly understood or duly recognized by the early missionaries. The misunderstanding of and failure to deal properly with this issue was no doubt one of the major obstacles to Christian mission among the Chinese.

In order to make Christianity more acceptable to the Chinese, when the Good Tidings Sunday School material were prepared, great emphasis was given to Biblical teaching and facts that would appeal to the Chinese mind. By the way, the Good Tidings Sunday School materials were the first entirely indigenous Sunday School curriculum published in the Chinese language. I was the planner and editor.

One day a Sunday School teacher came to me and asked my advice. He said that several children in his Sunday School class wanted very much to attend every Sunday, but were forbidden to attend by their parents on the ground that Christianity was opposed to ancestor worship. I suggested to this teacher that he encourage the children to take their Sunday School books home and read a few lessons to their parents. It worked. A few weeks later all the children were allowed to come back to Sunday School. The secret was that several lessons in that Sunday School book were based on Bible stories which depicted children's filial love for their parents, something which is very much valued by Chinese families.

In order to proclaim the Gospel contextually, the Asian churches must know clearly which part of what they have learned is the Gospel, and which part is an addition from Western culture. They must then re-interpret the Gospel in their own situation. This will be very difficult, but it is important if the Gospel is to be proclaimed effectively.

Question for discussion:

Some of the questions the Asian churches must ask are the following:

1. Which part of the message we proclaim is the real Gospel, and which part is nothing but Western culture or Hebrew tradition?
2. How much of this culture or tradition should be preserved, used or adapted, and how much should be neglected or discarded altogether?
3. What part of our own culture should be especially respected, studied and used to make our witness to the Gospel more effective?
4. How can we avoid muddling the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our own Asian cultures?

V. Proclamation is effective when it involves the whole church

I often remember a missionary story which I heard many years ago. On his return from the mission field for furlough, a missionary was asked, "How many members are there in your mission church?" "Fifty," he answered. "How many missionaries are there then?" "Also fifty," he replied. What he meant was that everybody in his church was a missionary.

Jesus never intended to carry out the task of proclaiming the Gospel alone. He always wanted to involve as many as possible. He first chose twelve apostles, then sent out seventy disciples and finally He gave the Great Commission to all those who follow him. He intended to show His disciples that only when the whole church is involved will the proclamation of the Gospel be effective.

This kind of involvement is needed especially in Asian churches today. On the one hand, most of the churches in Asia today do not have a sufficient number of professional trained workers, either because of a lack of funds to pay their salaries, or because there are not enough trained personnel available. On the other hand, the demands and challenges from the non-Christian community are increasing so rapidly that the Asian churches, a minority group, have to strengthen their evangelistic force greatly if they are to carry out their mission. The fact that Asia has the largest number of people who have not yet heard the Gospel of any continent, demands that all Asian churches involve all their people -- pastors and laypersons, men and women,

old and young, in their programme of proclaiming the Gospel.

But effective proclamation does not rest only on the number of people who are involved, but also on the gifts and training of those who are involved. Most of those who are actively involved in proclamation and who are able to witness effectively are people who are not only devoted and zealous, but who also have wisdom and training. For this reason, I strongly believe that the training of lay leadership is one of the most urgent needs of the Asian churches and that this is one of the greatest challenges to all theological educators today.

Up to a few years ago, the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, like many seminaries in the West, concentrated on the training of full-time church workers. Today, while still maintaining a comparatively small full-time training programme for professional church workers, the Seminary offers a variety of part-time programmes and courses for people from all walks of life. Of the approximately 220 students enrolled in our Seminary's programme last year, almost 200 attended various classes on a part-time basis. While some of these students are church workers--pastors, evangelists and Bible women,--the majority are lay people. Some of them are high school or college students, others are factory workers, still others are nurses, housewives, teachers. In order to bring the Seminary to the people rather than to attract the people to the Seminary, we have established several study centres in strategic locations in various parts of Hong Kong. Requests for the setting up of even more study centres have been received from various churches recently, but we have had to turn most of them down simply because we do not have sufficient resources to set up or staff new centres.

The full impact of this lay-leadership training programme is yet to be seen. But from what we know thus far, it has greatly strengthened the faith, life and work of our churches. In particular, this programme has given new ideas, new incentives, new strength to local congregations in their programmes of proclamation. For example, several congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong have during the past year or two organized mission boards or expect to do so soon. All these congregations are among those most actively involved in the lay leadership training programme of the Lutheran Theological Seminary.

#### Questions for discussion:

1. How can the people be motivated to become more involved in the evangelism programme of the church?
2. What kind of training programme is most effective in preparing the Asian churches for their task of evangelism?

3. What role should the seminaries play in the training programme?
4. In churches where there is no theological seminary, how can this training programme be carried out?

As faithful followers of Christ, we must proclaim the Gospel. As good stewards in the House of God, we must proclaim the Gospel effectively. Effective proclamation is most urgently needed in Asia, the continent where the greatest number of people live and die without a Savior.

How can proclamation be effective? Five things have been suggested for your consideration and further discussion. First, proclamation must have a goal; second, it must stress the positive; third, it should be used along with other methods; fourth, it must be done contextually; and fifth, it must involve the whole church.

In the time of the Tang Dynasty (7th, 8th and 9th centuries A.D.) China experienced its golden age of poetry. Among the many poets of the time was the famous Chao Ku. One day while visiting at Ling Yen Temple, Ch'ang Chien, a poet of inferior ability, was also there. In the course of their meeting Ch'ang got up and scribbled a brief verse on the brick gateway in hopes that the famous Chao would take up the challenge and finish off the poem. This he did with exceptional skill. Thus there developed a traditional Chinese expression: "Cast a brick to attract jade." I well realize that what I have presented here is as simple and common as the bricks. However, I am looking for the jade of your richer knowledge and experience.

Dr. Andrew H.K. Hsiao

# Challenges of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity in Asia

## A. Introduction

It has become a truism to say that we live in a period of rapid social change, so rapid that even processes which may be regarded as evolutionary have taken on a revolutionary character. A period of five years in the present age has the potential of a century in previous ages. In order to get our bearings in this rapidly shifting sea we need to note four new factors of our present moment of time - change is so rapid that they are probably factors of our yesterday already:

1. A Political Factor: Nationalism, which was such a strong factor in the great struggle for independence from colonialism, and which was closely allied to the Renaissance of Ancient Faiths, has taken a distinctly secular turn. The inescapable secular nature of economics and technology has hastened this development.

2. A Religious Factor: The Church has lost the initiative in Mission as a result of (a) the reduction of its influence because of the ending of colonial rule; (b) the struggle for real autonomy and for genuine identity by the 'Younger Churches'; (c) the introspective nature of church-union schemes and ecclesiastical restructuring schemes.

In the past the Church appeared in Asia as a ruler, sometimes, but only sometimes, it was dressed in servant's clothes, now it is proving very difficult psychologically and spiritually to develop a genuine Christian Servant Mentality.

3. An Economic Factor: Poverty is the primary problem facing Asia, poverty which is inexorable and irremediable. Despite all the good intentions, sincerity, and noble planning of the Colombo Plan, Development Decade, the World Bank and International Development Association, and despite the astonishing success, albeit partial, of such schemes, the sad fact is that development tends to favour the rich and to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Poverty as a fact is not new, what is new is the realisation that poverty is a moral and spiritual problem and not an economic one. Unfortunately this is often allied with the rather pessimistic attitude that do what you will poverty is here to stay.

4. A Sociological Factor: The beginning of the global struggle to find a proper means of living in accordance with our mutual inter-dependent-independence. The emergence of a global community is only possible when there is genuine acknowledgement of our own, and of each other's, independence and full autonomy. But, a united global community only becomes possible after that independence is understood in relationship to our mutual inter-dependence. The recent actions of the oil producing countries in raising the price of their product has perhaps done more to make this point than any other event in history.

I submit that these four factors, in varying degrees, characterize and determine the age in which we live. We ignore them at our peril. The Challenge of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs in this world and such are the prevailing conditions in our world today. For far too long we Christians have engaged in Don Quixotic tilting at the windmills of our imagination. It is time we came down to earth.

#### B. Basic Assumptions

As I survey the world in which I live, and participate in its life, I take my stand on four basic assumptions. It is necessary to state them here, partly in the hope that you will find them congenial to your own standpoint, and partly so that you will understand this exposition of the challenges of our environment in Asia today.

1. A profound conviction that Mission is the essential and determinative element in the *raison d'être* of the Church. If for example, this conference is not directly related to our understanding and pursuit of mission then it is, for me, of little consequence. It is necessary to add the rider that mission is always Mission in Action, so that talks about talks leading to mission are a sedentary contrivance to avoid our responsibility. The God of the Christian Scriptures is not only the Living God, he is even more so the God of Action, and God in Action.

2. An increasing awareness of our common humanity in its universality. In my own studies of other religions, in my pastoral duties, in my teaching there has been a growing realisation that fundamentally we deal not with ideas and concepts but with the men and women whose lives are lived in accordance, sometimes well and sometimes badly, with those ideas. Whatever challenge there may be comes not from Animism, but from Animists, not from Hinduism, but from Hindus, not from Buddhism, but from Buddhists, not from Islam but from

Muslims, not from Technology, but from Technologists, and it may be added, not from Christianity, but from Christians. Whenever I meet another human being I discover that no matter what religious or ideological label he bears, no matter what faith or non-faith he may have, we share a common humanity.

3. A humbling sense of wonder, after the pattern of Moses before the burning bush, at the spiritual dynamism at work in human history, including the present age and generation. Even such a staunch agnostic humanist as the late Sir Julian Huxley says: "Some events and some phenomena of outer nature transcend ordinary explanation and ordinary experience. They inspire awe and seem mysterious, explicable only in terms of something beyond or above ordinary nature." This "something beyond nature" he calls the "transnatural - it grows out of ordinary nature, but transcends it." (1) Perhaps the simplest explanation of the existence of Religion, using that term in its broadest sense, is the fact that everywhere man finds himself confronted by a 'power' both within himself and beyond himself.

Perhaps the most eloquent expression of this dynamism is seen in the magnificent 7th century Pallava style rock relief-sculpture of Gangavatarana at Mamallapura near Madras.

4. An acknowledgement that, as we contemplate the challenges of our environment we stand, in fact, before God in Jesus Christ. It is only as we are in Christ that this world has anything to say to us, and it is only as we are in Christ that we have anything to say to the world around us. The real confrontation, therefore, is that between ourselves and God. It is only as we are judged and renewed by God in Christ, and only as we accept that judgement and renewal, that we may discern accurately, understand precisely, and respond justly to the challenges inherent in our environment.

5. These four basic assumptions are in fact Articles of Faith, which, when combined, indicate that I believe that we share in the common humanity of the whole human race, which is continuously under the pressure of an eternal spiritual dynamism, and stands under the judgement and renewal of God in Christ who calls us into the Mission of God.

#### C. Ancient Faiths and Technology

1. The term Ancient Faiths in the title of this lecture is taken to include not only the well-known giants of Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, and Islam but also the massif of Folk-Religion which is

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(1) The New Divinity, in Essays of a Humanist, London ,1964, p. 226.

variously called Animism, Primitive, and/or Tribal Religion. There are two reasons for making this deliberate inclusion: (a) in one form or another this is the source of most of the religious pressure with which the daily life of Asia is filled; and (b) the actual religious life of for instance, the Theravada Buddhist village populace of Thailand, and Sri Lanka, of the Saivite and Waishnavite village populace of South India, and of the Muslim Indonesian rural populace, owes as much, and sometimes more, to the primal folk-religion concerned than it does to the giants whose banners are flown. Furthermore, this so-called Animism has too often and too easily been dismissed as a rag-bag of superstitions without realizing that it offers a Weltanschauung and a basis of daily life which is found to be satisfactory by millions of people in Asia today.

An observation of Van Leur concerning the influence of Hinduism and Islam on Indonesian life is pertinent here. He maintains that the effect of these world religions on Indonesian culture was nothing more than "a thin and flaking glaze....Magic and belief in spirits continued to exist under Hinduism and Islam". (2)

2. It is apt and proper that Technology should be linked with the Ancient Faiths. Together they form a unit in Asia and should not be regarded as separate entities. As often as not alongside the motor car, the colour T.V., the quartz crystal watch, the electronic pocket computer and all the other paraphernalia of modern technology there is the kamidana, i.e. the Shinto 'God-shelf', and the Buddhist household shrine; the Shen Wei, or ancestral tablet, together with a statue of Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, and a picture of Kuan Fung, the God of War; the salagrama, linga, yantra and mandala in the home of the Japanese, Singapore Chinese, and Hindu technologist.

The two in combination, Ancient Faith and Modern Technology provide and determine the life values. Here it is important to remember that there is no such thing as Christian Technology over against Hindu Technology, or Muslim Technology, or Buddhist Technology. I am not sure whether there is bad technology over against good technology, there are only brilliant technologists and bungling technologists.

3. No matter whether we choose to speak of contact, or of communication, or of controversy with Ancient Faiths, no matter whether we take the Barthian-Kraemer discontinuity line, or the Devanandam-Vergheze common humanity approach, we must recognise that we live and work in the vortex of an unremitting religious, even spiritual,

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(2) Indonesian Trade and Society, The Hague, 1955, p. 95.

interreaction between cultures, religions, and ideologies. Just as the Ancient Faiths challenge Christianity, so Christianity challenges them.

At an earlier stage in the history of Missions this challenge produced a valuable renaissance of Hinduism. Indeed it may be said that Hinduism and Buddhism have never been the same since they were brought into contact with Christianity. In the same way just as Technology challenges Christianity, so it challenges the Ancient Faiths, and conversely both Christianity and the Ancient Faiths should be challenging Technology. Certainly Christianity, in its institutionalized form, has never been the same since technology began exercising its influence. This interreaction is especially strong where you have an undergirding by Folk-Religion because, to use Quaritch Wales term, there you have a lively "local genius" actively reworking every external influence which comes into its orbit. This is all part of the dynamism of religion. It serves no useful purpose to pretend that we can deal, for instance, with the tenets of any faith today as though they stood in splendid isolation from each other.

4. Having, therefore, cleared away several areas of possible misunderstanding we are at last ready to consider the main topic of our study, i.e. the challenges of the Ancient Faiths and of Technology to Christianity in Asia.

#### D. Challenge

1. A cursory glance at even a small dictionary shows that the word 'challenge' has several different meanings such as: 'to call on one to settle a matter by fighting or by any form of conquest', 'to claim as one's own', 'to object to'; and as a noun it can mean, 'a summons to a contest, especially a duel', and 'the demand of a sentry'. We need to be quite sure in what sense we regard the Ancient Faiths and Technology as the source of challenge to Christianity. Do we see them as a threat to our existence, or to the continued existence of Christianity? Do we feel called to be locked with them in what can only become an unholy war no matter how sacred its terminology? Do we contemplate a struggle with them in which the soul of man is the prize to be awarded to the strongest, whom will be determined by the number of goals he scores, or the number of adherents he can muster? Or, is it a struggle, not against one another but with one another in order to realise the full potential of Man in this world? Or, is it a summons to identify ourselves, to stand up and be counted, to declare who we are, from where we come, for what purpose we have come, and to what end we are moving? It will be seen that there is an element of contest but the greater element is that of a call for identification.

2. The most difficult, and the most profound question which Asia has been asking for centuries immemorial is "Who?", "Who am I?" "Who are you?" "Who is God?" For an equal number of immemorial centuries the answer has come down, "Neti, neti". Towards the end of the last century Colin Campbell, a missionary of the London Missionary Society, was stoned when he stood on the road between Bangalore and Mysore in front of the temple of Aprameyaswami, the Vaishnava God, the immeasurable, unknowable and ineffable. His text was Acts 17: 23 "this unknown inscrutable that ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you".

'Kevaladvaita', the pure monism of the Spirit, taught so vigorously by Sankaracarya is fundamental to the Asian appreciation of experience. The fact that everything is part of the universal display of maya is summed up in the formula 'tat tvam asi' which precludes identification of object over against subject. Scepticism which has loomed so large in Asian thinking since the time of Nagarjuna, who taught that truth and 'self' could only be found in 'sunya', i.e. The Void, is chiefly scepticism concerning identity.

3. Shinto and the multifarious forms of ancestor worship, and I apologise for the use of the term because what it describes is neither worship nor deification as Christians understand those terms, which is an integral part of tribal religion throughout Asia, pose the same question concerning identity. Take away the tribal ancestors, both real and mythological, and no one can know himself, his relationships to others, or the meaning and purpose of any given moment in time. The question "Who am I?" can only be answered in reference to the Primal Ancestor beyond whom, outside whom, there is no identity. Whatever is understood as personality can only be understood in terms of the attributes, the activities, and the laws promulgated by the Primal Ancestor. My Batak colleagues will forgive the allusion but in order to know the identity and the selfhood of a 20th century Toba Batak you must first know the identity and selfhood of Si Singamangaraja, the Batak Priest-King(s) and that of Ompu Mula Jadi na Bolon, who is in Philip O. Lumban Tobing's words "the cosmic totality".

4. There is not time to develop this theme fully in Biblical terms. It must be sufficient to suggest that the whole of Christian Scripture in one way or another deals with two fundamental questions: "Who is Man?" and "Who is God?", and I dare to claim that that is the correct Biblical order. The Creation stories of the opening chapters are of the inspired Semitic attempts to reply to the first of these questions. It was many centuries later that the Jews began to grapple with the second one concerning the identity of God; and it was only when the first century of our era was reached that they were

adequately prepared to receive God's answer in the form of the incarnation. We take three examples from John's Gospel and one from the Acts of the Apostles to demonstrate that this is the primary question addressed to God become Man in Jesus Christ. In John 8: 53 the Jews say to Jesus, "Who do you claim to be?"; in 12: 34 the crowd ask of Jesus, "Who is this Son of Man?"; and in 19: 9 Pilate asks of the prisoner before him, "Where are you from?"; and the stricken Saul on the Damascus road cries out, "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9: 5). The Jews, the crowd, Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator, and Saul the Pharisee of Pharisees: these were the Ancient Faiths and the Technology of the first century world. Their challenge to Jesus: "Who are you?", and according to the answer they heard, and in accordance with their understanding of that answer, they learned their own identity.

5. In this way the Biblical emphasis and the Asian milieu are seen in juxtaposition, from Asia arises the cry, "Who are you?", from Christian Scripture comes the counter question, "Who are you?". Whoever you are you will find your true identity when you know me!". It is against this background that we can begin to apprehend the challenges of the Ancient Faiths and of Technology to Christianity in Asia.

#### E. The First Challenge we Discern is an Ontological One

1. It is the demand to be recognised, to be acknowledged, to be given the dignity of having existence. For far too long too many Christians have lived and worked in Asia as though Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Islam and the mass of Tribal or Folk Religions had no real existence. As though it were true that if they are ignored they will eventually, like the Beduin, pack up their tents and disappear into the night. They will not. Just as the existence of God does not depend upon our faith in him, neither does the continued existence of the Ancient Faiths depend upon our acknowledgement of them: They are here, they have been here for much longer than Christianity, and they will be here for a long time to come. Technology is, of course, in a slightly different position in that it is a product of man's development, but it is here to stay. That they have all been long-neglected by Christianity is not difficult to prove. The curriculum of our theological colleges is a good indicator of what is regarded as important according to the Christian standpoint. It is only very recently that serious consideration has been given to the teachings of the Ancient Faiths in Christian Theological education. We still do not do justice to the theological ideas and teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Most graduates of Asian Theological colleges will be able to give you a fairly accurate explanation of terms such as Stoicism, Gnosticism, Docetism,

Sabellianism, Arianism, Traducianism, Pelagianism, Kenosis, Hy-postatic Union, and Perichoresis to mention some of our favourite examination topics. But how many of them could give you anything like an accurate explanation of visishtadvaita, pradurbhava, paramapurusha, Asuddhaniscaya, Nirmanakaya, pancakkhandha, paticcasamuppada, tauhid, khadlan, and kalam? We shall not produce a form of Christianity which is recognisably Asian unless and until we acknowledge that there are Asian concepts and thought forms which may well unlock doors which have too long remained barred. I am not asking that we join in the adoration of Saraswati, I am simply asking for the recognition that what she represents is as noble, and as relevant, and as real as that signified by the name of Aristotle.

2. Two incidents in my own ministry have brought me to this conclusion. The first was in the early days of my work as a district missionary in the Mysore. I was on a district tour visiting isolated Christian families in remote places. It was ten o'clock at night when I arrived at the rest house in a small town where we had one Christian family, the local policeman, his wife and children. A message was waiting for me with the urgent request that I go to the house immediately. On arrival the obviously very worried husband asked me, "What can I tell my children?" Being the only Christians in the place, which is a centre of Brahminism, the daily pressure of Hinduism raised a thousand and one questions in his children's minds which he could not answer. The second incident took place a few years ago when my church sent me to Ghana. I was very interested in the so-called African churches. I asked every minister I met about them, all their answers were in the most general of terms and to the effect that they were just a load of syncretistic rubbish. One day in Kumasi I heard the sound of drums. "What is that?" I asked. "Oh, it's a service at an African church." "Come on," I said, "let's go and see what they are doing." The response was "We do not go to such places and things". I went alone and had a very interesting half hour in which I learned more about African spirituality than several hours of 'respectable' church services and conference sessions had taught me.

3. Those two incidents are separated by a little more than twenty years, but they have taught me that we are not, in general, prepared to recognise the religious elements in our environment. Consequently we are ill-equipped to teach people how to deal with the religious pressures which bear down upon them at every turn of their daily lives.

F.

1. Once we have made this conscious and deliberate act of recognition we can begin to listen to what is being said in the world around us.

The second challenge is a Confessional one in that we should take note of what the Ancient Faiths say about us and our Christianity. Perhaps we shall find our own identity through the humiliation of hearing their evaluation.

2. I begin with a quotation from Abd-al-Rahman Azzam, who was Secretary General of the Arab League from 1945 till 1952.

"The emergence of Christianity was a benefit and a blessing to humanity in the early centuries, for it taught the followers of Christ to resist the causes of evil and averted much bloodshed, plunder, spoilage, aggression, and tyranny that would otherwise have occurred. Although Christianity maintained its struggle for a long time, its adherents soon forgot the religion and mission of Christ and made of their lusts, ambitions, and interests the pretexts for oppressive wars which scarred humanity with their consuming fires in the East and in the West from the late Middle Ages until our present time."

A biased view, a distorted view, an exaggerated view? Possibly, but this is the assessment of a major Muslim statesman.

3. I turn to another major statesman, this time to the Hindu philosopher S. Radhakrishnan:

"Unfortunately Christian ethics were never frankly a way of life for this world. The early Church treated life on earth as a short time of waiting for a new life, "When we which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds."

The Middle Ages looked upon the world as a vale of tears, through which each individual passes to the vale of judgement. Only in a monastery or in a hermitage can the Christian life be led. The Protestant puritan attempt to enforce the Christian life on average men, living in the world, was a failure." (3)

Again an unfair view, an unbalanced view, a prejudiced view? Possibly, but not an unreasonable one!

4. Is Christianity in Asia today divorced from the religion and mission of Christ, and is it irrelevant to life in this world? If it is neither of these things why is it that eminent and learned men

like Abd-al-Rahman Azzam and Radhadrishan say that it is? There is no comfort for us in the opinions of technologised society. A few years ago a survey of the Roman Catholic Church in France produced the following concerning the effect of urbanization which is regarded as the paleotechnic phase of industry, "If urbanization is not the only cause of dechristianization it is nonetheless one of the most important." (4) In other words, urbanized technologised society finds Christianity totally irrelevant.

5. The great lesson from all of this is something which Christians find difficult to believe. It is that the truth of Christianity is not self-evident, the truth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world is not self-evident. And shouting has never increased the strength of one's argument! The truth of the claims of Christianity, its validity as a way of life, and its relevance to our day to day situation in this world have to be proved. It is a significant fact that early Christianity did not produce any notable preacher, whose name has come down to us, before Chrysostom in the second half of the second century, furthermore the early church did not possess, and did not produce, any kind of organized Board of Mission, and yet it grew, expanded and increased at a breathless pace. The reason is not far to seek, the quality of the lives of Christian men and women. In short, we respond to the challenge of our environment by letting Christianity be Christian, by letting the Church be Christian, by letting Christians be Christian. To paraphrase a favourite saying of Lord Justice Burkitt, "Christianity should not only be Christian, but manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be Christian." One of the first steps is that we should get rid of the double standard which we habitually employ in our judgements of Ancient Faiths over against our judgements of Christianity.

G. We move, therefore, to our third challenge which is a Spiritual one.

1. A little sane thinking, a few meetings at depth with Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim friends will soon persuade us, if we need persuasion, that Christianity and Christians do not have a monopoly of sainthood, of moral rectitude, and of goodness. I have been humbled by the spirituality which I have met in friends from the Ancient Faiths. For two years I sat daily at the feet of a Mysore Brahmin, Pandit K. Hanumanta Rao, the depth of that man's spirituality is unforgettable, for three years I worked in close cooperation with an eminent criminal lawyer, another Mysore Brahmin, who at the very beginning of our relationship made it quite clear that he was a Brahmin, whose daily life was firmly related to the highest spiritual principles. Whenever I am in Kuala Lumpur I make an attempt to visit the Venerable K. Sri Dhammananda, the Chief High Priest of Malaysia,

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(4) "L'Eglise et la Pastorale des Grandes Villes"

to drink a cup of Sri Lanka coffee with him is a benediction. There are no romantic illusions here, it is not claimed that every follower of these Ancient Faiths has a saintliness that surpasses that of Christians, but it is affirmed that their best is impressive and humbling.

2. Almost any page from Rabindranath Tagore's writings will feed your soul, for example, "The most important lesson that man can learn from his life is not that that there is pain in this world, but that it depends upon him to turn it into good account, that it is possible for him to transmute it into joy.... Man's freedom is never in being saved troubles, but it is the freedom to take trouble for his own good, to make the trouble an element in his joy" ("Sadhana"). That makes it just that little easier for me to take up my own cross.

3. A delightful word from Gautama Huddha himself, "Moreover, brethren, though robbers, who are highwaymen, should with a two-handed saw carve you in pieces limb by limb, yet if the mind of any one of you should be offended thereat, such an one is no follower of my teaching." (5) That makes turning the other cheek a rather palid business!

4. When Rabi'a was asked if she loved God, she replied, "Yes". Then she was asked if she hated the devil, and she said, "My love of God leaves me no time to hate the devil."

5. And from the great Confucius, "If you fail to serve men alive, how can you serve their spirits? If you do not understand life, how can you understand death?" (Analects 11: 11). "Moral power does not live alone. It is sure to have neighbours." (4: 25)

6. What about this for a daily prayer? "Lead me from the unreal to the real. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 1: 3:27).

7. If there were time I would pick up some of the verses from the Bhagavadgita which is probably the most influential spiritual writing in the whole world. But you have to live with the Gita, you cannot chop it up piecemeal. You have to apply the good Lutheran practice of allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, i.e. allow the Gita to interpret the Gita. But just three short slokas, "When the mind, held in check by service of the Rule, comes to stillness, and when from beholding Self by Self he has joy in Self, And when he knows the boundless happiness that lies beyond the sense-instruments and is grasped by understanding, and in steadfastness swerves not from truth, that which once obtained, he deems no other boon better wherein he abides and is not shaken even by sore pain." (6: 20-21)

And we have not even begun to touch upon the treasures of Bhakti religion!

8. Now I am not saying that these examples, which are really minute drops from an ocean of spiritual treasures, are superior to what we have in the Gospels or in the writings of the Fathers, but they do speak to the Asian mind in a manner in which so much of our Christian theologizing, buried, as it is, in and under Western thought-patterns and philosophy, does not.

They are quoted here in an attempt to convince you that there is an Asian spirituality which demands recognition and which demands of us that we develop, demonstrate, and display a much more impressive spirituality in our Christian lives than most of us do. Let us get back to the position which enabled the unknown writer of the Epistle to Diognetus to say, "Broadly speaking, what the soul is to the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians throughout the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, but is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world. The soul, itself invisible, is guarded in the body which is visible; so Christians are known as being in the world, but their religion remains unseen." (6: 1-4)

9. This quotation reminds me of the fact that one of the urgent needs connected with our life and work in Asia is that we Christians need to develop in plain, simple terms a doctrine of the soul which is so vital amongst Tribal Religion and Animism. We have so concentrated our attention, theologically, upon the doctrine of God that we have paid scant attention to this question. Asia's problem, like the rest of the world really, is not the problem of God but rather the problem of the soul Man.

H. This leads directly into the next challenge which is the Personal one.

1. It has already been stated that the concept of personality is the basic stumbling block in the Ancient Faiths of Asia. It is also the stumbling block in Technology. The Ancient Faiths raise the problem in metaphysical terms, Technology raises it in existential terms. This means that the effect of Technology on the development of the Ancient Faiths will be to further repress and hinder the emergence of their appreciation of life in terms of personality. Despite all its boons Technology is the greatest alienating factor in the world. It alienates the individual from his family, it alienates the worker from the end product of his work, it alienates producer from consumer, it alienates State from Populace, it alienates man from the world, it alienates the world from God. Every step of

the process of alienation is one of dehumanization and depersonalization. You cannot even have an argument with a computer, let alone make love to one.

2. I remember being very amused one day walking into a Brahmin village in a remote area of Mysore State, as it was then called, to find a group of Brahmins, sacred thread and all, sitting on the verandah of a house happily playing cards. Nowadays, I am amused and also disturbed when I walk into a Malay village to find all the occupants grouped around the communal T.V. I am not anti-T.V. but it is one of the strongest instruments of alienation we possess today. It need not be, but on the whole it is proving so to be.

3. A note of tragedy in all this is that this alienation is carried on in the name of, and for the sake of, efficiency. The people cry out for bread and the milk of human kindness, and they get dehydrated, reconstituted, homogenized, tinned, frozen, pre-packed, pre-prepared, vitamized, stones. And they get it from the automated, help-yourself Super Markets owned by the unseen, unknown, and unknowable Directors of the multinational corporation which guarantees the lowest minimal standards of service and quality which are commensurate with the highest rates of profit. It is all terribly efficient, especially when linked up with the high pressure advertising campaign which will persuade the hardest of hard-boiled husbands that they cannot live without the latest product of Cyclonic Carbol Corporation although they do not want it, they do not need it, they cannot afford it, and they will not use it.

4. You know what I mean! This is the challenge to Christianity to demonstrate that when it talks about Love it means the Love which is the basis of all personal relationships, of all personal life, of all personal joy. Modern politics, economics, and technology all treat men and women as so many ciphers in statistics about GNP. Before all this the 'noble savage', mythological as he is, had the dignity of being a man, a human-being, a person.

5. The first step we can take in humanizing and personalizing life in this technological age is to redeem the family, and family life from its meshes.

During the first three centuries of our era Christianity vanquished the 'lares et penates' of the Roman Empire and banished Janus and Vesta from the atrium of the Roman house. At the same time Christianity itself was a home and family based Faith. Since the fourth century Christianity has been increasingly church-oriented, and decreasingly family and home centred.

In contrast to this Animism, Shinto, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Sikhims are all home and family centred. They have their shrines, temples, vihara, synagogues, and mosques but these buildings play a minor role by comparison with the home. Important events such as name-giving, initiation, weddings, and funerals are celebrated in the home. The home is the focal point of worship.

Go round Singapore, visit the homes of the followers of the Ancient Faiths. Take a look outside towards sunset, the Chinese housewife brings out her joss-stocks, kow-tows, sets one in the door lintel, one before the tablets of the ancestors, one in front of the household gods. In every Hindu home the father is the family-priest who performs the five daily sacrifices on behalf of the whole family. In Muslim homes throughout the Muslim world some, at least, of the five daily prayer rites are performed in the home. Between my Indian and Indonesian periods of service I was pastor of a congregation in the midst of a Jewish community. On Friday evening the flicker of candle light revealed the gathered family around the table for their weekly celebration in 75% of the houses in that area. At the beginning Christianity, like all the other Ancient Faiths, was home based and family centred. Let us make it so once again. This is the genuine Asian tradition. Once you succeed in humanizing and personalizing family life in the name of Christ the Christian community will truly become the "soul of the world". This is a request to the Liturgiologists; produce an order of service for a weekly celebration in the home, led by the father who is assisted by the youngest child and embracing the whole family life. Let it be simple, let it be direct, let it be in plain language, above all let it be personal.

#### I. Herein the Theological challenge comes through:

1. Humanization and personalization for what?" What is the end, the goal, the purpose of life? It is here that in theological terms we must seriously consider life in the light of the soteriological and eschatological terms of the Gospel. In more simple words, just what are we aiming at? The Hindu concept of purusartha or trivarga gives man a choice of three aims, viz. dharma; artha, kama. They are valid alternatives. Each has its own code so that Order, Wealth, and Pleasure are not contradictory. They are one of the many Hindu acknowledgements of the intrinsic variety of human life, human ability, and human character. The Muslim directs everything to the Last Day under the judgement of the One God. We Christians in the season of Advent talk vaguely, not just poetically but downright vaguely, about the Parousia, and half of us have very serious doubts about whether it will or will not. Little wonder that we suffer from both a loss of nerve and a loss of purpose. The best we can come up with is "Keep the Church going for another year".

2. Dharma is Order. Let us take purusartha and Christianize it in personal terms. There is ample material in the New Testament to teach us what a Christian Order of Society would be. And it is not a clerically, i.e. ministerially, dominated society. It is not strange, or is it, that the Ancient Faiths are all directed towards a lay-society. Let us take a leaf out of the Buddhish book, after all they have taken many out of ours, and make it possible for every Christian to give two or three years, more if they wish, either in youth, or in middle-age, or later in life, of full-time service in and to the community. This does not mean the demolition of the present ordained ministry, it means an extension of it to include the whole Christian community in Mission. It would also redeem the ordained ministry from its prison of elitism.

3. Artha is Wealth. It is high time we came to terms with the problem of Wealth-Poverty. There is nothing intrinsically wrong about being wealthy, but neither is there anything intrinsically beatific about poverty! As we have noted Technology favours those who already have and tends to widen the gap between the rich and the poor, and creates contrived needs so that consumption patterns are distorted at the expense of developing production to meet basic needs. It is doubtful if the Church can do very much about all this except to encourage individual Christians to deliberately adopt a fairly simple way of life, to regard personal wealth and property as a trusteeship from God. Cautama Buddha in Vyagghapajja Sutta gives the fourth of his conditions of Worldly Progress as Samajivikata, i.e. 'balanced livehood', viz. "lead a steady life, being neither too extravagant nor too sordid".

Bhavabhuti in "Malatimadhava" I: 5 says, "wealth is desired only for the help it affords in the discharge of social, economic and religious duties and obligations." On the same subject Kalidasa in "Raghuvamsa" I: 7 says, "who acquired wealth for giving away" this is the real purpose. Again, it is not claimed that all our Buddhist and Hindu brethren live by these precepts, just as it is not asserted that no Christian lives a life of self-sacrificial service. The point is that in the highest traditions of Asian ethics material wealth as the basis of the simple life of service to others is the natural and hoped for commitment. Let us redeem that tradition in Christ by living it.

4. Kama is pleasure. A justified and justifiable goal in life. The Christian puritan tradition which often seems to have taken it for granted that anything which gives pleasure is wrong is a millstone round our necks. Half an hour examining the relief sculptures in the Hoysala temples at Halebid and Belur convince you that according to Hinduism pleasure, even in its most sensual aspects, is a

gift of the gods. Much Sufi poetry is so deliberately ambiguous in its treatment of Love that it puts John Donne to shame in both his pre and his post-Christian periods.

One of the genuine delights of village life in Asia is that the people spend half their waking hours doing nothing in particular except savouring life. It is not a question of laziness, it is an intuitive awareness that life is to be enjoyed. It may be here that my paganism really shows, but I cannot believe that it was the intention of the Almighty that from the age of five years we should enter into the slavery of school in order that when we leave it we get a 'good' job, which will alienate us from our fellows, fill our minds with anxiety, our digestive tract with ulcers, and our hearts with embolism, in order to acquire a plethora of material goods from which death will separate us in our fifties by heart disease. But that is man in this technological age! It is not by accident that in the West the Technological Age is the age of the Permissive Society where anything goes as and when you feel like it. The eroticism, if you must have the word, of Asia, including the Tantric 'maithuna', has always had a basis of order and a purpose of fulfilment of self through the senses, and it has always been recognised that it could be used coarsely for indiscriminated self-gratification. Perhaps the capacity for conscious enjoyment is the distinguishing characteristic of Man, and it is only when Man is fully personalized that he develops that capacity. It may seem trite to ask that Christianity should introduce a note of joy into a world besieged by social injustice, poverty, violence, and fear, but joy is the most personal of feelings and Technology is devoid of feeling.

5. This trivarga of dharma, artha, and kama is sometimes translated as the Good, the Useful, and the Pleasant. These three in combination sum up the ancient life values of Asia. The Good is that which produces, supports and perpetuates Order, the Useful is that which is beneficial and may be employed for the sake of others, the Pleasant is that which enables life to be enjoyed by all. It is not a sentimental formula, rather it is a rigorous discipline of life.

J.

1. We have come to the end of our self-identification in response to the challenges of the Ancient Faiths and of Technology. We speak in personal terms not of Christianity but in terms of a Christian. "Who am I?" The Christian replies:

I am one who acknowledges my fellow man and his dignity.  
I am one who listens to my fellow man and learns to know myself from him.

I am one who lives by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and for the Spirit.

I am one who is committed to humanize and personalize life wherever I touch it, and wherever it touches me.

I am one who strives to create that kind of Order in which I can share all that I have in mutual enjoyment with others.

A five-fold response based and centred upon family life marked by tolerance, hospitality, humility, and integrity.

2. Do we recognise ourselves? This is what we could become. And then, I believe, Asia would recognise us as Christians, and without Christians there is no Christianity in Asia or anywhere else.

3. Confucius said, "Do not hanker after quick results, nor visualize petty profits. If you do the first, you will not have any great influence. If you do the second, the really important things will not get done." (13: 17)

4. Bhartrhari said, "The righteous soul will not deviate from the right path, whether the worldly-wise praise or censure them, whether they lose or gain wealth, whether it involves immediate destruction or long life."

5. Rabbi Yitzak Meir of Ger said, "We are told by the Psalmist first to leave evil and then to do the good. I will add that if you find it difficult to follow this advice, you may first do the good, and the evil will automatically depart from you."

6. Gautama Buddha said, "Earnestness is the path of Nirvana; thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already."

7. Husain al-Hallaj said, "Between me and You there is one 'I am' which torments me. Oh, take away by You 'I am' my 'I am' between the two of us."

8. "Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God." (I John 4: 7).

Dr. H. Parkin



Dr. Sutan Hutagalung (Indonesia) intervenes on behalf of youth. Seated is Miss Jeyanthi Nathan, youth delegate from Malaysia.



CCC Commissioner Dr. Andrew Hsiao intervenes on behalf of women. ▲

# Social and Political Challenges to the Churches in Asia

Asian societies are caught up in a historic revolutionary ferment caused by the process of development and modernization under the impact of science and technology, and under the inspiration of a new secular and humanist ethic. This ferment is nothing but the reflection of the impatience of the masses to demolish the structure and patterns of their traditional life and establish a more brotherly and just human society. This is indeed an entirely new human condition which is full of powerful challenges to the churches in Asia. It is in this environment that the churches and individual Christians have to discover the meaning and relevance of Christian life and mission. Unless the churches adjust their sights, adapt their behaviour patterns, acquire new skills and knowledge, redefine their operational objectives and methods, and renew their institutional structures, they will not be able to respond positively in an adequate and appropriate manner to the challenges of the new human condition in Asia today. So it is not only necessary but imperative that the churches understand their socio-political environment and should come to grips with the Asian realities so that they would be able to participate as responsible citizens more effectively and constructively in the great task of establishing a just and human society.

## I. Revolution of Rising Expectations

Political freedom and independence which the new nations of Asia attained after World War II brought along with them the "revolution of rising expectations". During the years of the freedom struggle, people in these countries had been told that with the achievement of freedom and independence, and the withdrawal of imperialist regimes, their poverty would disappear and that there would be all-round plenty and prosperity. So it was natural for the poverty stricken masses of Asia to expect and openly express their aspirations for the good things of life in terms of food, shelter, clothing etc. More than these material goods of life, millions of people so far suffering from social inequality, discrimination and oppression began to demand the recognition of their human dignity and interests. In short, in a bid for their total liberation, various social groups and interests began to clamour for radical social and economic changes which would usher in a new social order based upon principles

of equality, justice and liberty which would ensure human dignity and material well-being to all members of the society irrespective of their birth, wealth, status, religion, caste, sex and so forth.

Thus, economic well-being, equality, justice and human dignity have come to be accepted as the functions of political independence. So much so that the political regimes and leaders in these Asian countries have been under great pressure to meet these demands of the people. This paper endeavours to highlight the strain and stresses in the Asian quest for a new society, to emphasize the primary role of politics and power in creating and maintaining such a society, and to examine and evaluate the various political methods adopted by the different countries of Asia to meet the challenge of social changes and use them as means of development.

The terms "Asian quest" or "Asian revolution", it must be mentioned here by way of caution, are used in a very general and broad sense. It does not indicate that the quest is the same in all the countries of Asia and the problems inherent in the situations are the same. In fact, there is a wide diversity in the social structures and political systems prevailing in these countries. Nor does the term indicate any common approach or method in conducting the search. It also does not mean that there is a common, united effort to solve the problems confronting them. In fact, instead of collective and cooperative action, there are many difficult and delicate conflicts of interests among these new nations. So it is somewhat unrealistic to speak of any "Asian quest" or "Asian revolution".

However, there is a certain limited meaning attached to these terms. It consists in the fact that all these countries are engaged in the great task of reordering and restructuring their respective traditional social, economic, political, cultural and value systems. Though they differ from one another in their respective situations, methods and approaches, they are all aiming at modernizing their societies, economies and politics. So there is some value in speaking of an "Asian quest" with a view to drawing comparisons and contrasts between different situations and approaches. Such a comparative study of modernization in Asian countries would be of mutual benefit to them.

This paper, however, does not intend to make such a comparative study as I am not familiar with all the situations in the different parts of the sprawling continent of Asia. My experience and understanding are limited to India. So I shall try to concentrate on the Indian situation with the hope that it will offer points of comparison and contrast to other situations.

## II. Social Change and Primacy of Politics

Scholars and policy makers very often assume that the aspirations of the developing countries of Asia are more economic than political, and that they want economic development more than anything else. Political leaders in different countries of Asia also thought that with the achievement of independence, politics of power would recede to the background and people would bend all their energies and undivided attention to the singular task of economic development. Such assumptions have created the impression that modernization is predominately the function of economic development through the application of science and technology, and that once economic development was achieved, other required social and political changes would follow. In such situation, economic development came to be considered mainly in terms of physical in-puts and out-puts, industrialization and agricultural development and capital outlays and targets. Thus it was seldom realized that economic development is not an independent variable by itself, but it is inextricably connected with certain other social and cultural changes and political developments.

Yet of late, there seems to be an increasing awareness among policy makers and social scientists of the fact that economic development cannot be realized in isolation, and that it requires a congenial framework of social and political institutions, power structures, values, ideologies and laws. Opinion is veering round to the point that non-economic factors such as education, social structure and political institutions are as equally important as physical and out-puts as factors conditioning economic development. It is also being increasingly realised that factors like national unity, authority equality, social justice, economic well-being, human dignity and mass participation in decision-making processes and nation-building programmes are as much the consequences of economic development as they are the indispensable prerequisites of economic growth. People have come to recognize the fact that there is a mutually reinforcing interrelationship among the various economic factors and non-economic factors like the social changes taking place in the development countries of Asia and that these should be considered and cultivated as means of an all-round development and should be harnessed for that purpose.

As a result of this realization, politics has emerged as the most important factor in the task of directing social change and, through that, economic growth with social justice. Contrary to the expectation that with the end of the freedom struggle politics would cease to be the main preoccupation of the people in Asian countries, politics has attained a new and larger dimension, and has come to pervade every field of human endeavour. The all-pervading importance of politics is so keenly felt by the people in developing countries that

politics is considered to be a very serious business and politics has come to be accepted as the most important tool for the realization of economic growth, social justice, and human dignity and well-being.

Consequently, there is a tendency to put politics and political power before everything else. It almost amounts to the replacement of Marxian economic determinism by political determinism. No wonder then that the Asian leaders are inclined to agree with the late Mr. Nkrumah in saying: " Seek ye first the political Kingdom, all things else shall be added unto you". As M.M. Thomas has put it: "....there is in Asia today a preoccupation with politics today which makes politics the main battlefield for defining the meaning of the Asian revolution and the kind of new society that should replace the traditional as well as the means to realize it"

The churches in Asia are challenged to take cognizance of this primacy of politics in their environment and foster and promote political consciousness in their congregations. It is high time the churches realised that whether on the national scene or in the international scene, the great human issues of Asian societies are in the realm of politics. The forces that deny economic well-being, equality, justice, freedom and dignity to vast masses of people in the Asian societies are not just the products of the personal sins and vices of individuals but they are built with the very structures of our political institutions, and social and economic systems. If human beings are to be liberated from demonic and dehumanizing forces of poverty, hunger, ignorance and exploitation, first of all unjust structures of political power of our society must be radically change or demolished. It calls for an out and out political action. The churches in Asia, if they are to play any effective role in the momentous struggles of social justice must become more active and dynamic politically with a view to hastening the collapse of the structures and institutions of oppression and exploitation and create a new society of peace and justice.

### III. Social Changes

As emphasized earlier, social changes and economic development are the most important functions of government and politics. As such churches should take politics more seriously. It implies that in order to understand the politics of developing countries, we must first understand the nature of social changes taking place in these countries. Only then we would be able to know why politics is so important, and what kind of political ideologies, institutions and policies are necessary in order to yoke together economic development and social changes for the purpose of ensuring social justice, human dignity, welfare and equality to all members of the community.

The basic social realities which constitute the context of politics in the developing countries of Asia may be stated in the following manner:

1. There is an effort to replace the traditional societies based upon narrow group loyalties and parochial interests by a national community transcending all sectarian loyalties and group solidarities.
2. New types of political institutions and authority structure are being forced to take the place of the traditional ones which are based upon ascription, conformity of the individual to the group through obedience to group customs and reverence for group authority located in elders.
3. Another characteristic feature of the Asian social scene is that a process is at work by which the traditional social structures based upon caste and filial loyalty are being gradually eroded to yield place to a new social order based upon recognition of the equality and dignity of the individual human being.
4. The awakening of the masses and their participation in the political process also are noteworthy features of the contemporary Asian situation.
5. The abject poverty of the masses is too stark a reality to be ignored by anyone. This is sought to be eradicated by means of industrialization and agricultural development through centrally directed state planning.
6. Finally, undergirding all the changes mentioned above is the secular world view and secular meaning of human existence. This has triggered the process of secularization as a result of which social structures, legal systems and personal life styles of people are being gradually withdrawn from the authority of religions and religious institutions and beliefs.

Thus national integration, rationalization of authority, egalitarianism, mass participation and secularization constitute the matrix of the politics of the emerging nations of Asia. In order to recognize the critical importance of these factors in solving the problem of social and economic development, we need only to take a look at the countries which are accepted as models of modernized societies.

Modernization in the West happened over a period of five centuries beginning with the Renaissance and spreading through the Protestant Reformation, Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the French Revolution. A study of this modernization process shows that the Western countries, in order to achieve modernity in the social and economic sectors of human life had first to provide a political base

and framework in the form of a well-organized state with centralized authority, national unity, political equality and involvement of the masses stage by stage in the political process. It is a fact of history for example, that strong political regimes and national unity provided by the Tudors, and later by the oligarchic ministries in England and the Bourbon in France, and other enlightened despotic regimes in other countries made a tremendous contribution to the modernization of their societies. So, though it is not possible for Asian countries to follow these Western countries step by step along the path of modernization, still they have to evolve a framework of political ideologies, methods, leadership and institutions congenial for modernization in terms of economic growth, social justice, human dignity and material well-being.

#### IV. Choices

As it is neither possible nor desirable for Asian countries to repeat in the same order the process of modernization as it happened in the West, they are expected to make certain fundamental decisions regarding the way which they can realize modernization.

(1) Revolution or Evolution: - One of the decisions the Asian countries have to make pertains to the problem of choosing a suitable political method for bringing about the required social changes. It is indeed true that there are many factors inherent in the social system of Asian countries which are inimical to human dignity, social justice and economic development. The caste system in India, for example, which is hierarchically structured, buttressed by custom and tradition, and sanctioned by religion, denies equality and human dignity to millions of human beings. Moreover, although caste regulations are declared invalid by the Constitution, they still survive, and continue to hamper social and occupational mobility of labour, thus retarding the effective organization and efficient utilization of labour force which are essential for the growth of modern large-scale enterprises. The joint family system, another pillar of traditional Indian society, despite its social security function, reduces the individual's incentive to work, dampens the spirit of enterprise, encourages laziness and discourages social and occupational mobility. Further, the authoritarian and "big-brother" tendencies inherent in the joint family system do not allow adequate freedom to the individual to realize and develop his best self.

Again, in the context of present economic relations between landlords and peasants, employers and employees in business concerns, and capitalist and workers, millions of people are denied opportunities for self-development as well as for making their full contribution to the development effort of

the nation. Landless peasants and industrial workers who have nothing but their labour to sell do not have any incentive to put in their best effort to the productive effort of the nation, nor do they feel any identity of interest with their masters. If development is to ensure equal opportunity and justice to all, such unequal and iniquitous social and economic relations should be changed.

There is also the problem of inequality of sex. This denies human dignity and equality to women. It is also responsible for not fully utilising the talents and potentialities of women who constitute half of the population.

Above all, the alarming rate of population growth together with the scarcity of resources creates conditions of abject poverty which not only keeps millions of people ground to a sub-human level of existence but also denies a fair chance of survival to millions of children. Poverty means stunted personalities and inhuman existence for many. This requires stringent measures to curb population growth. This can be brought about only by a radical change in people's mental attitudes and religious and cultural values.

All these changes are necessary to make life worth living. But the question is how should these changes be brought about?

Western countries did not have to make a conscious choice regarding the method of social change as it happened in a natural way and at a time when mass awakening was not there. So they could afford to go leisurely through a process of evolution in order to realize modernization. But for a few major upheavals like the French Revolution the process of modernization in the West was free from violent revolution and took an evolutionary course of constitutional and parliamentary reforms and laws. But the situation in the developing countries of Asia is different. In these countries, what happened in the West over a period of five centuries, has to be telescoped into a few decades. Further the fact that there are countries which are way ahead of them makes it impossible for them to drag their feet along the path of modernization. The spirit of "catching up with the West" is too much in the political thinking and programmes of these countries. In such a situation the speed with which development is to be achieved is an important matter. It is very difficult to say whether every Asian country should go through a violent revolution in order to bring about the radical social changes considered to be necessary for development. But one thing which is certain is that all these countries are in need of radical and far-reaching social changes in order to create a congenial environment for social and economic development needed for the total liberation of men and societies from enslaving and dehumanizing forces and

structures. Whether this can be achieved through revolution or evolution depends upon the situation prevailing in individual countries.

This choice between violent revolution and peaceful constitutional evolution poses a serious dilemma to the churches in Asia. There are many Christians who advocate revolutionary action for change on the ground that traditional forces and structures of enslavement and dehumanisation are so strongly and powerfully entrenched that they need violent uprooting. They also argue that the present unjust and exploitative power structures and property relations are themselves full of violence in so far as they oppress millions of people and stunt their personalities and human development, and there is nothing wrong if such inhuman structures and institutions are sought to be liquidated through violent action. On the other hand, there are some who argue that there is no justification for any violent action for Christians whose faith is rooted in the love and peace so supremely manifested by Christ on the Cross. It is evident from these opposing views and stances that the relation between justice, love and power in concrete situations is too complex for simple solutions. They cannot be easily integrated nor can they be dissociated from one another. But one thing is certain, namely, that the churches must take a strong position and stand with the poor and oppressed in their struggle for justice. As far as possible, they must organize and mobilize the oppressed masses and develop in them the strength for vigorous non-violent struggle. When they are forced to endorse violence and participate in a violent revolution, they should do that only after earning their right and establishing their credentials to call the masses for violent action through a life struggle based on self-sacrifice and identification with the poor and the oppressed just as Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi did. In other words, the churches must produce "a new spirit of combat" akin to that generated by our early missionaries during the Indian Renaissance of the 19th century.

(2) Total or Selective Change: the Scope of Structural Changes: - When we say that the traditional societies in Asia are caught in the process of modernization, we do not mean that they are going to become the exact replicas of Western societies. Secondly, it also does not mean that the traditional societies will shed all their traditional features and become modern over-night. The process of modernization does not take place in a social vacuum. Modernization sets into traditional society and acts as leaven in the old society. Thus, for quite some time tradition and modernity are bound to coexist. Not even the most thorough-going revolution can succeed in destroying tradition completely, lock, stock and barrel. If it is so, certain choice should be made regarding what parts of tradition are to be

discarded, modified or retained intact.

Thorough-going modernizers see in the presence of traditional factors some irritants and obstacles to progress and development, and so they would like to sweep away all tradition in one stroke. Again, the caste system of India must be mentioned as an example. Many people think that caste vitiates democracy, and perpetuates social injustice and human indignities. Caste is also exploited by selfish politicians for political purpose. So it is urged that unless caste is completely and totally annihilated in all manifestations, it will not be possible to achieve a just and truly human society in India.

But in dealing with a matter like caste we should bear in mind certain points. Caste is a part of a complex culture and a complete social structure. The difficulties involved in the total and complete transformation of the complex Hindu culture and society should not be underestimated. More than hundred years ago, Alexander Dreff thought that the Western educational system, which he helped to introduce into India, would act like a mine to explode in due course and destroy the foundations of the Hindu society. But even after more than a century of Western education, caste has not completely disappeared because Hindu society is not a granite block which shatters but a sand which just changes its shape in response to every challenge and attack. Thus though it is not completely destroyed, it does not remain in its traditional form. It has undergone many changes in terms of occupational taboos, dietary restrictions and other things.

I have mentioned this in order to indicate the fact that when an encounter takes place between a traditional society and modernization, it forms a dialectical, rather than a dichotomous relationship between the two entities. Tradition-features, without totally succumbing to the onslaught of modernization, make certain adjustments and adaptations for the sake of survival. In such a process, tradition imbibes modernity without being completely devoured by the latter.

This is what has happened to caste in the process of political modernization in India. Democracy is, in a way, political mechanism for reconciling conflicting interests and interest groups. In Western countries, there are any number of secular interest groups which facilitate democratic politicising and fight for the rights and interests of their respective members. But in India, such secular interest groups are very few in number. In this country, caste performs the functions of a Western secular interest group, and thereby facilitates the functioning of democracy. It has also helped the hitherto suppressed large communities and groups to wage a collective struggle and bargain for the welfare and dignity of their members. Thus people have found in caste a source of political power and strength which can be used for the

realization of secular goals like equality, liberty, social justice, human dignity and economic well-being.

The secularization and politicization of caste should not blind the churches to the other evils inherent in it for even in its modified form caste continues to deny certain fundamental human rights to men and women, and to treat millions of human beings as untouchables. In spite of all constitutional prohibitions and denunciations of political leaders, untouchability is widely practiced in rural areas. The untouchables still live a segregated life outside and away from the main caste Hindu villages. There are separate wells for exclusive use by Hanjans and caste Hindus. There are still cases of untouchables serving as attached or bonded labourers of a particular caste Hindu family. As long as these unfortunate people remain unliberated from the inhuman and degrading practice of untouchability, the church should not relent in its fight against caste which is the root of untouchability. Their liberation requires another Gandhi. The challenge for the Indian churches is: can they produce a Gandhi or a Vinoba Bhave who can champion the cause of the untouchables which is advocated by nobody at present?

(3) Order of Priorities and Sequence: - The third choice which the Asian countries are expected to make in their endeavour to establish a just and peaceful society pertains to the matter of fixing priorities among national integration, centralization of authority and equality and mass participation. The question to decide is whether these countries should attempt to realize all these factors of modernization simultaneously or one by one according to a carefully evolved scale of priorities.

It is desirable to have all these factors present in a balanced way. If there is national unity and integration it will be easy to set people to obey the authority of the State. Where there are national identity and effective authority present, it would be possible to think of equality and mass participation in politics without any fear of anarchy and political disintegration.

To think of such an ideally balanced co-existence of national unity, authority, and equality and mass participation is like aspiring for economic development with an ideal situation in terms of savings, capital and investments. But the reality is far from the ideal situation desired.

The experience of the Western countries and Japan clearly indicate that such an ideal combination of the factors of political modernization is impossible to achieve. In most of the Western countries, for instance, centralization and rationalization of the authority of the State first took place before the emergence of national unity and equality and mass participation. It is historically true that the

enlightened and authoritarian regimes of the Tudors, the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs preceded and paved the way for the emergence of national unity. Only long after the achievement of a strong State and national unity attempts were made to introduce equality and mass politics. The case of Japan was different in the sense that a common language and insular position of the Japanese islands made it possible for the people of Japan to develop national unity and identity first, then the Emperor system provided the framework for a strong authoritarian regime. Equality and mass participation were never talked of and discussed before the end of World War II.

The dilemma confronting Asian countries is whether to attempt all of them simultaneously or in sequence. The tendency seems to be in favour of simultaneous quest for all the factors of modernization rather than to achieve one by one. What makes the situation more difficult and complex is the fact that political equality in the form of universal adult franchise and elections have preceded the realization of national unity and the establishment of a firm centralized authority structure. In such a context, it is inevitable that people should try to achieve all of them at one and the same time. But this has posed innumerable problems. Much of the uncertainty and lack of appreciable progress is to be attributed to this difficult task of achieving all the factors of modernization simultaneously. So while it is not possible to go back on equality and mass political participation, still ways and means should be found by which, within the framework of equality and mass participation, national unity and State authority can be realized and firmly established. This would mean that an order of priorities should be evolved which would be acceptable to the people, or at least to the politically significant segment of the society.

It is in this context of choosing the priorities and sequence of modernization that the recent political developments in India involving the proclamation of national emergency together with the Twenty Print Economic Programme and the comprehensive constitutional amendments which have created strong government with a determined will to maintain the unity and integrity of the national and promote social justice. This reflects the option of India for a strong government with effective authority.

One of the major problems that mark such a government is necessarily that of national integration. The existence of only minimum governmental restraints on individual freedom in a country like Great Britain may be due to the fact that the British people are integrated into a national community and have become so well acclimatized to the requirements of a national community that social cooperation and social obedience have become almost national habits with them. But socialization of the individual has not progressed to that

extent in India. The primordial sentiments and loyalties of people based on race, religion, region or language are so strong that they are unwilling to surrender their narrow and parochial identities and loyalties in favour of a spontaneous commitment and voluntary obedience to an overriding civil order. Such primordial attachments often breed disaffection among different groups of people which erupts in the form of linguistic agitations, demands for separate states, irredentism, etc. Whenever such fissiporous forces threaten the security and integrity of the nation, the government should have necessary and adequate power to cut down the primordial and anarchical forces to their right size and reconcile them to civil order.

#### IV. Forms of Leadership and Government

By far the most difficult problem confronting the developing countries of Asia is the problem of establishing a structure of network of political institutions under the guidance of competent and committed leaders for development with justice and eradication of poverty. So far excessive dependence on Western models has marked most of the efforts to tackle this problem. The fact is that most of the intellectuals who came to constitute the ruling elite in these countries are Western-educated and deeply influenced by Western political ideologies, both liberal democracy and Marxism. Further, there is a tendency to identify political modernization with the achievement of either parliamentary democracy or a totalitarian Communist system of government. But very soon, it was realized that the Asian situation were too peculiar and too far removed from the Western countries and their cultures to allow them to become the carbon copies of the latter.

This we see clearly reflected in the breakdown of parliamentary democratic institutions which were adopted most enthusiastically in the name of independence. Democratic institutions and procedures soon proved to be inadequate to bring about the much needed national integration. They were found to be unsuitable to make the authority of the State effective all over the country. They imparted a fresh impetus to all regional and parochial feelings and interests which brought most of these countries to the verge of disintegration and collapse. The democratic political methods and procedures proved to be too cumbersome to introduce effectively social, economic and cultural reform much needed for the purpose of establishing a new society of peace and justice. Elections, and all the rigmarole that go with them, encouraged corruption and abuse of power in high places. All these engendered a certain disillusionment and disenchantment with parliamentary democracy. No wonder, country after country lost faith in democracy and opted for some other political system.

This makes it clear that the way for political and social modernization of the Asian countries does not lie in aping the Western countries. The fact that the Asian countries have not blindly imitated the Western model is to be seen in the large variety of political institutions that exist in Asian countries. There are monarchical regimes, military regimes, basic democracies, guided democracies, People's democracies, and single-party dominant democracies. Recent developments in India are indicative of a general Asian trend to question the efficacy and relevance of the forms of Western democracy in Asian socio-cultural milieu and to try to find an authentic indigenous Asian type of democracy distinct from the Western parliamentary democracy. The churches and Christian intellectuals are too much steeped in Western culture and liberal values to see the value of this Asian trend, and hence are not able to see eye-to-eye with the new regimes which are often dubbed by them "authoritarian". But it is unrealistic to ignore the peculiarities of the Asian situation and refuse to participate in the search and struggle of Asian people's for some authentic Asian form of democracy inspired and informed by the Asian genius.

One significant feature common to all these regimes is that irrespective of the ideology and institutional set up they manifest an awareness and zeal for modernization. The impact of science and technology, rationalism, secularism has been so great that even the most rigidly tradition-bound regimes like monarchies are compelled to do something to reform value systems and authority structures in such a way as to promise values like equality, freedom and justice. This is reflected in the franchise given to the masses and several other political institutions and procedures which make it possible for the masses to participate in the decision-making process.

So ultimately the question is not what is the form of the political regime a country has, but how and for what purpose the power of the State is used by the regime and its leaders. The immediate political choice the developing countries have to make is not whether they should have democracy or some kind of an authoritarian regime. But the question of supreme importance whether they have the will to use the political power at their disposal to liberate the masses through radical reforms and structural changes from political, economic, social and cultural oppression. Irrespective of the forms of government, political regimes in Asia must use the power in their hands for the following:

(1) A political regime, first and foremost must maintain the unity and integrity of the country and the nation. All efforts aimed at development and justice would be of no avail if there is no national unity and nationalism.

(2) The second follows from the first, that is, the authority of the State must be firmly established. This is very necessary in the context of the a-political nature of the Asian societies and lack of a tradition of the rule of law.

(3) The regimes should have power to introduce radical reforms with a view to promote the process of secularization by breaking up the integration existing between religion and secular areas of human existence.

(4) Power should be also used to change the existing property relations and social relationships which are not conducive to economic, social and human development.

(5) The regimes must accept a positive responsibility and cultivate a serious commitment to solve the problems of poverty through distributive justice.

(6) They must recognize the basic reality of the new social groups which are clamouring for a share in political power. Necessary institutional arrangements must be made and structure created in order to enable these groups to play their legitimate role in nation-building.

(7) The regimes should create an institutional framework for increasing peoples participation in all spheres of national life and for their education in the political process.

(8) Finally, the political system must have a built-in mechanism by which the ruling elites are saved from the corrupting and corroding influence of power, and by which the revolutionary dynamism is always kept alive.

Dr. M. Abel

# Self Reliance or Creative Discipleship

## Introduction:

God dwells among men and women. We believe that he is come in Christ to reconcile the world to himself which in its self-will had become estranged. In this same Christ he has called into being the Church to be bride of Christ and body of Christ. The Church is in the world to do the work for which Christ came into the world. It is therefore of the very essence of the Church to be an extension, as it were, of Christ in the world; for to be in Christ is to participate in His mission. By definition then, the Church's business is God's business.

Perhaps no one among us will deny some such sequence of faith as the above line of reasoning suggests. As members of Christ's Church and as those who belong to one of the bodies within the Lutheran World Federation we are sensitive to our origin and our responsibility. But we have gathered here to reflect on what specifically it might mean to affirm Christ in Asia and what we express when we affirm a new community in Christ.

In the previous three lectures we focused our attention on proclamation of Christ in Asia; we endeavoured to analyse and respond to the challenges to our faith in the Asian contexts of today. We have now reached that point of our deliberations when we have to take a serious look at ourselves. This, at the best of times, is a risky undertaking. It is wrought with untold perils when it involves the issue of Self Reliance for Mission. Self reliance in or for mission is a loaded term. It might prove to be downright dangerous if we should mean by it total dependence on the resources of a person or persons - even if these be members of a vigorous and self confident church in Asia.

Fortunately, we may safely assume that none of us would want to read the term in such an absolute fashion (that would simply be some form of colonialism in reverse). What we mean when we use the term self reliance is the necessity - indeed, the obligation - of cutting the umbilical cord that has for so long bound us to German or American Lutheran bodies, yet of affirming solidarity in interdependence. We want to demonstrate that we are alive and well and

living in Asia, weaned of the spiritual milk food of dependence on personnel and resources. Self reliance means further that we are becoming, if we have not yet done so, the people of God in Asia who testify to and proclaim the sovereignty of God with us and within the sphere in which we are called to work.

We know, of course, that we have no monopoly on God; we do not even have a monopoly on service. But we have a mission. What that mission is and how we might execute it honourably must be the crux of our deliberations here at Singapore.

As is clearly apparent, our task in this paper is multipronged. It forces us to examine existing and evolving patterns for ministry, it challenges us to raise the issue of participation of the people of God (something that should be second nature to Lutherans, but which undoubtedly cannot be taken for granted - as even a cursory glance at our history of missionary involvement will clearly show), and we are, thirdly, asked to examine our resources.

I am proposing to get at these three facets of the task under a title which somewhat modifies the originally proposed title. By doing so I am implying from the very outset that there is an alternative to self reliance, or at least a complementary way of looking at it. In introducing a sub-title I should like to suggest yet another shift - a shift in emphasis which I consider to be essential. It is the demand that we see ourselves in the light of self analysis and examine what we mean to do when we claim to be in "responsive Christian Mission in Asia Today". (Note well, not yesterday and not tomorrow, but TODAY). Thus much by way of Introduction. Let me now proceed with the task as I see it.

### I. Self Reliance for Mission

#### A. The Integrity of Indigenous Mission.

God's mission in Asia today may well be for us to say in love but with conviction and commitment, "Missionary go Home". Such drastic action may be necessary, not because we feel that the end of mission is upon us, but because we know that mission is not the monopoly of any one group in the church nor is it the activity of the few, directed toward the many. Responsible mission today (and this is true in Asia more than anywhere else in the world), is Christian people of a given area or place undertaking with integrity and in all honesty an indigenous and concerted dissemination of the liberating word of God for their time. Such undertaking cannot be confined to the leader of a church, however competent they may prove to be, nor should it be a task given to scholars, teachers or technicians alone. Only when we

ourselves are prepared to step into the sandals which Jesus left to the disciples in his challenge to them to go into all the world, can we finally send the missionaries from abroad home. Yet how tragically wrong Christians in the past read this injunction. They took it in terms of geographic, economic or industrial expansion - they interpreted it to be a mandate for cultural imperialism of one kind or another when its simple intention was to make known in the world the word from God (and such spreading of the word is a backyard affair, as much as it is a major highway enterprise). "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," (John 17: 18) is a mandate for indigenous mission, it is a call to turn one's attention to the children of the household first and then only to those outside the gates. It is an injunction to every Christian and not one to members of mission societies or special Boards of the Church.

Of course, to cease being a missionary church in the traditional sense of the term does not absolve us from being in mission; as recipients of favour and grace, we are called also to the dispensers of the same to the world about us; anything less than that would disqualify us from being Christian. As Christians in Asia we continue to have a mandate from our Lord; it is to raise our voice against evil - to be a prophet in the world. We continue to have a mandate from the Lord of the Church: it is to tear down and to build up - to be shapers of our world, co-creators with God. We continue to have a mandate from the Lord of all life: it is to proclaim the good news of liberation to lead out prisoners and give sight to the blind.

#### B. Patterns of Ministry.

It may be argued that the early Christian community did not have a philosophy or theology of mission. There may not even have been as high a degree of mission consciousness as we have managed to develop in the churches of our generation. Yet, it would be false to conclude from this that the early Christians did not have a mission or that they were not conscious of one. Too numerous are the references which point to the contrary. But we are perhaps not far off in surmising that the simplicity of their missionary methodology was such that they were enabled to develop a self understanding in mission, built on priorities rather than techniques.

One such set of priorities is clearly expressed in Matt. 6: 33, "see ye first the kingdom of God .... and all these things will be added unto you". We need not detail what implications such a setting of priorities undoubtedly had. In any case, it enabled

these Christians to carry out the injunction of their Lord without the benefit of Mission Boards and Societies and such like machinery which to this day is the pattern to be followed in any successful enterprise; the pursuit of primary objectives in the wake of which all other things fall into their respective places.

Now there is a great deal of talk about questions of methodology. Mission Sunday messages, Papal encyclicals, editorials of Missionary Journals and occasional papers on the topic of missions raise the matter in its many forms. And invariably the matter comes down to a tension between evangelization and development - what these two terms denote and which of them ought to receive primary attention. The early Christians, I submit, did not worry about the distinction and therein lay their strength. Evangelization was their service, and their service they witnessed to the living reality of the incarnate word, Jesus Christ Himself. If evangelization and service or development are thus integrally related we will find the situation which Pope Paul VI sketched so succinctly in his sermon on Mission Sunday 1970, "when the Gospel comes to a place, charity comes with it, bearing witness to the human validity of Christ's message (and) ... there comes the result of this activity, in a new way of life". (1)

What then ought to be the missionary tools and methods we may usefully employ? Both the methods and the tools of our ministry in Asia ought to be germane to an Asian way of life; they must reflect Asian ways of things, doing and serving. There will naturally be varieties in ministry and differences in the service we are able to render at given times and in specific places, but at all times we ought to seek first the things that make for a spreading of the good news of the kingdom, regardless of the cost and without too much concern for uniformity of such forms with previous patterns.

#### C. Participation of the People of God.

##### Building Bridges of Understanding.

We have reached a third stage in our analysis. It is to reflect on what it means for Asian Christians to participate as the people of God in the mission of the Church. As Lutherans we have a proud theological heritage in Luther's concept of the priesthood of all believers. Yet again, this is not a monopoly of ours, but merely the heritage of the rediscovery of an evangelical principle which we have honoured by our neglect. In an age which treats with suspicion any power blocs and which has learned to distrust established religion as much as it distrusts establishment of other kinds, we must ask what concretely participation of the people of God in the mission of God can mean without, on the one hand, leading to disorder and, on the other, to confusion of the specific

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(1) Neuner/Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, page 315.

functions of ministry. Dare we learn here from history for the mission of the Church today?

A primary task implied in the mandate to do mission in the world is to building bridges of understanding. Such understanding would appear to be the responsibility of every Christian in local congregations and parishes as well as in the outposts in which a Christian may find himself as one individual among many, none of whom confess Christ or even remotely understand that there is liberation in the name of Jesus Christ.

Such bridges of understanding must be built above all among Christians of the different confessional families. Hence the call to unity and ecumenical relations must be heeded to. Mission today cannot be done effectively and convincingly by any one Christian denomination in isolation from other Christian bodies - it must be a unilateral endeavour which takes seriously that profound prayer of our Lord in which he anticipated the failures and shortcomings of his followers when he prayed "ut omnes unum sint".

If any Christian church in Asia is gripped by a sense of powerlessness in face of the vast resources of cultural and ideological empires which forge ahead in gaining converts, perhaps the first and foremost task before us is to build inter-denominational bridges of understanding and cooperation in missionary undertakings.

A second bridge to be built in the mission of the Asian churches today is one to the various cultures. To do this successfully, we must above all else eradicate from our attitudes and methods the corpus Christianum mentality. In its place must be put an invigorating awareness of the transforming and transcendent power of God who works in and through the cultural treasures of the peoples of the earth to manifest the glory of his presence. Mission in the past has often been sadly neglectful of this insight and has thus failed to tap the potential of growth and renewal in any one culture. Many of the missionary endeavours of the past were, in fact, affected by cultural superiority which raised up barriers of communication and hindered the activity of the spirit through the medium of culture. To utilise bridges to cultures of nations and tribes we must work in sensitivity to the spirit who penetrates cultures and transforms them.

Equally difficult and requiring even greater sensitivity and faith is the building of ideological bridges. The need for such bridges is necessitated by the ever growing number of ideologies and ways of life which claim with an almost religious absolutism total

allegiance of their followers and devotees. Many of these ideologies have succeeded in gaining millions of devoted followers by promising and, at times delivering, a package of goods which includes temporal security, equality and liberty here and now within the reasonable boundaries of a common good and the promise of an even brighter future. Among ideologies such as these, the Christian church appears merely as one among many options and its record of service is often tainted by real or imagined associations with former human agents of injustice and exploitation whose image and performance is considered less than god-like.

In fact, many ideological power structures render service with greater selflessness and with more efficiently honed resources than most Christian churches are able to muster. Nor is our current involvement in the plight of suffering humanity always of the highest order. Christian mission today operates in a politically charged environment; every action, even inactivity, carries political weight and may have far reaching consequences. In such a world it is paramount that responsible Christian mission involve the ability of discerning between the things that are Caesar's and the things that are God's and the wisdom to render unto his due.

Fourthly, responsible Christian mission in Asia is to build bridges to the many religious communities whose numerical majority and revitalized spheres of activity make simple conversion difficult, if not impossible. The people in Asia are conscious of their common humanity; they become increasingly doubtful of any religion which heightens exclusiveness and underscores divisions. The impact of secularism has eroded religious identity consciousness and has established the claim of concern for humanity.

To all of us then in our respective religious camps comes the demand, 'You must be born anew'. It brings with it renewed stress on inwardness and man-wardness in all renascent forms of modern Asian religions and calls for a word of reconciliation; this word must be heard as a word from God, the Father; it must be a word to discipleship and not to churchmanship - a word which sets free for creative service.

#### D. Involvement of Resources.

##### 1. Climate for Dialogue

Self reliance for mission in the Asian context is to engage our unique resources, not as a means of creating alien cultures in our own cultures nor of imposing non-Asian sets of values, but in a

forum for dialogue. Such forum for dialogue necessitates our exploring and utilisation of resources in a way that will enhance our living together in mutual trust and as members of living faiths; not in order to bring others into the courts of our temples, but in the awareness of our limitations as seekers and in the deep knowledge that we all, in differing ways, are under the dominion of Christ the Lord of all human situations and that He ultimately is the one who calls to obedience and service. The decisive point in our dialogue should not be who is right and who is not, but whether by clearing up misunderstandings we may be able to prepare the soil for the saving of all people. Our dialogue must express in complete fidelity to that which we received that we have a treasure in earthen vessels and that none of the forms, used by us now, is necessarily the ultimate vessel for the people of Asia.

## 2. Climate for Understanding the Faith

There should be no dilemma. If we are aware of the necessity laid upon us to realise and make known the plan of God that all be summed up in Him, the Church may once again become the altar upon which the sacrament of the unity of the whole human race is celebrated. (2) The mission of the Church thus understood is to locate the place and pinpoint the altar; it is to make known the source of light by being the light in the darkness of little faith and unbelief.

"And so the plan of the Creator, who formed man to his own image and likeness, will be realised at last when all who share one human nature regenerated in Christ through the Holy Spirit and beholding together the glory of God, will be able to say, "Our Father"". (3)

## II. The Goals of Mission

We have taken what may appear to be a circuitous road to the final section of this paper which is the goals of mission. However, it seemed essential that we first draw attention to the place of mission, its participants and available resources before venturing to raise our sights to some possible goals.

Fully aware that anything we have said in this paper is but a fragmentary presentation of a vast endeavour and deeply conscious of our limitations in presenting the goals, we, nonetheless, submit for your consideration four goals which, we believe, ought to be essential aspirations of our churches in mission and which will enable us, finally, to move from dependence to self reliance

(2) cf. Lumen Gentium of Vatican II

(3) Lumen Gentium, The Documents of Vatican II, W.M. Abbot, (Ed.) p. 594.

through to genuine and creative discipleship in the contexts of our various situations and in obedience to the creator of life who gave us the awareness of our liberator and who has laid upon us the necessity of being "en Christo"

#### A. Socio-cultural Reorientation and Renewal.

We have hinted at it earlier and now must state once again with force that the basic goal of Christian mission in Asia ought to be a revolutionary re-orientation of the socio-cultural structures within which we have operated for so long and which we have tacitly condoned by our acceptance of them. In the process of making room for the renewal of ourselves by the power of the Christ, we must allow for the possibility of re-alignment of the structures within which the men and women of Asia may realise their destiny.

Perhaps the day is far off as yet "when the lamb shall lie beside the lion" in more than a figurative sense. But is it too much to anticipate the day when race, colour and creed will no longer be determining factors in reshaping of basic human communities, but in which social justice and equality are determinative? The Church must through its individual members and through corporate action promote the social structures which allow for a fundamental re-orientation of social goals and values; we must learn to overcome our own limitation and provide the means by which others will be able to accept the lead toward a new social order. The way to such renewal may be through the role of a suffering servant; it may be the mission of the Church to accept its role willingly and to endure to the end, i.e. to that moment in history when the dominion of God will be recognised for what it is and acclaimed by men and women of good will.

#### B. Socio-political Dimensions of a New Asia.

No creative missionary thrust of the Church in Asia should ignore the socio-political ferment which during the last few decades has brought down former powers and toppled dynasties, ushering in new regimes and social orders which claim to exist for the greater good of the common people.

The Church's task in such changes is both positive and negative. It must learn, on the one hand, to affirm in prayerful support whatever promises to bring about justice and would enhance human dignity. At the same time, its awareness of human hubris and sin demands of her a word of judgment - a call to repentance and spiritual renewal that would encompass more than mere lip service

to a new order of justice and peace, if such an order should infringe upon the rights of some and destroy the harmonious interaction of divergent elements in a society.

We are aware, of course, that a responsive church in this mission would face its most arduous task firstly, because no single denomination would be able to speak with absolute political consensus and secondly, because whatever word the Church should utter would be suspect by the political power interests of being subversive and hence opposed to their own blueprint for change.

No longer can the Church be in mission and still cling to the old adage, "The world belongs to the State, heaven belongs to the Church". As long as its members are citizens of a state, they must be prepared to carry out their secular calling in awareness of their allegiance to Christ and responsible to their fellowmen, both in the political realm and in the social realm of service within the economic resources of their respective communities.

#### C. Calling to Christ

Lest we be charged with failing to point to the central task of the Church's mission, let us affirm unequivocally that the chief goal of any enterprise undertaken by a community of faithful Christians must be to call the world to Christ.

There undoubtedly will always be a place for the traditional proclamation of the word. In some form or another this proclamation will likely also be centred in sacramental celebration of His presence through visible means of grace. But pointing to Christ must involve above all else the ethnical dimension of "imitatio Christi". Any meaningful missionary endeavour must ultimately be mindful of the words ascribed to H.T. Kerr, acknowledging that "We are sent not to preach sociology, but salvation, not economics but evangelism, not culture but conversion...., not a new social order but new birth...., not democracy but the Gospel... (for) we are ambassadors not diplomats". (4)

We are, in other words, sent to be (1) in Christ and (2) for others.

#### D. Sent to Be

##### 1. In Christ

To be in Christ may mean many things, it has both an historical and an existential dimension; it is grounded in the creative

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(4) quoted by G.W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, p. 209..

purposes of God as it is an expression of His redemptive designs. It is to be a mind - through which Christ thinks a heart - through which Christ loves; a voice - through which Christ speaks; a hand through which Christ works.

## 2. For Others

What better words to recall the Church's essential reason for being than to echo the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer when we say that to be in responsive mission in Asia today is to be in creative discipleship by being for others.

We have not yet reached the end of world crisis. Struggles for power, wealth, prestige will continue to dominate human activities. The Kingdom of God is far from realised in any of the social, cultural or religious expressions of today. Chance and change are busy ever (as John Bowring's wellknown hymn has it) and revolutions will continue to alter the face of the world. Should we fail to respond to these revolutions, we will fail to be true disciples of Christ.

The task of bring "Every thought into subjection to Christ" is an ongoing one and with it the mission of the Church to be in the world, yet not of it, to be in Christ and for others so that "the entire human race should form one People of God, should coalesce into one Body of Christ, should be built together into one temple of the Holy Spirit". (5)

## III. Conclusion: Toward a New Creation

The Sixth Assembly of the L.W.F. is called to meet under the theme "In Christ - A New Community". Our deliberations here are in anticipation of things to come then. Rather appropriately perhaps, the Sixth Assembly continues the theme under which Dr. Marc Linehard had placed the Fifth Assembly in the opening sermon on July 14, 1970, when he chose for his text Revelations 21: 1-6 and notably the words "Behold, I make all things new".

As the representatives of Lutheranism then, so we must now hear these words with contrite hearts for having allowed the old heaven and the old earth to capture our fancies and hold our attention. But we may also anticipate in joyous surrender to the Lord of all living things the ever renewing dimensions of His dominion in the whole of human life through the ministry of Christ in our secular occupations.

"In Him we intend to stay and work together".

Dr. P. Prabhudas

(5) from the Decree Ad Gentes, 1965.

# Regional (Asia) and Global Partnership for Mission in Asia

Partnership for mission denotes the rediscovery of our common Christian task in facing the challenges of the changing situation in the social, economic, and political order in which people live today. It also stresses the urgency of the missionary task of the Church, both as a gift and call in Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

The renewed missionary thrust and renewed search for mission reorientation is also directly related to the following: (1)

- The rediscovery of mission as the task of the whole of God's people - instead of small groups of people specializing in mission;
- The emphasis on the wholeness of the Gospel and of the human person;
- The need to give an expression in mission at the same time to both evangelization and diaconic service, to prophetic witness concerning justice and the mutual encouragement and strengthening of churches;
- The necessity to eradicate paternalistic attitudes and structures of domination from mission and inter-church relationships and to underline the fact that every church is both giver and receiver.

A new missionary era has dawned. The dominant role of Western Missions is fast disappearing, and God is raising up from the so-called "Younger Churches" a great new resource for world evangelization. All this demonstrates that the gift and responsibility to do mission belongs to the whole body of Christ. All churches, in interdependence, should therefore be asking God and themselves what they should be doing both to reach their own area and to send missionaries to other parts of the world. A re-evaluation of our missionary responsibility and role should be continuous. This should be done in "partnership in obedience". Thus a growing partnership of churches will develop, (and has developed) on the local, the sub-regional, the national, the regional (such as Asia, Africa etc.) and the world cooperation of churches, both in inter-denominational structures like the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches and the confessional organisations such as for example, the Lutheran World Federation.

Seen from the standpoint of the basic biblical roots of mission, "Partnership for Mission" both the new structure and the new strategy are needed.

(1) DCC/LWF News Letter, September 1976, page 14.

Both the Old and New Testaments witness to "Sending" as an integral part of God's work. The sending Abraham, and the prophets, and in the New Testament the sending of Jesus as the Son of God to the world, and the Great Commission all witness to this. God sends Jesus and Jesus sends His disciples, His Church empowered by the Holy Spirit, (Mat. 28: 18-20) so that "Whoever believes in God should not perish, but have eternal life". (John 3: 16)

The Fifth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (Evian, July 14-24, 1970) had as its general theme "Sent into the World", stressing that mission is an essential function of the Church. The Bangkok Conference of 1973 had "Salvation Today"; the Lausanne Congress (1974) voiced the need for "Evangelization of the World", the theme of this International Congress on World Evangelization being "Let the Earth hear His Voice"; the Synod of the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome (1974) had "The Evangelization of the Modern World", while the L.W.F. Consultation in Nairobi (1974) declared as its theme "Proclamation and Human Development".

The recognition of the task and the total missionary obligation of the Church as being sent into the world, implies the need for a unity of mind and heart, and a structure which is an important part of the church's strategy to fulfil its mission.

Partnership for mission, clearly denotes the churches common unity and calling for cooperation and interdependence, but it also poses the question of how to translate the diversity within the churches constituencies into structural and organisational forms. An example in this regard we have seen in the Third W.C.C. Assembly in New Delhi, where acknowledged relatedness of church and mission brought about the incorporation of the former International Missionary Council into the W.C.C. as the Division on Evangelism and World Mission. Within the Lutheran World Federation, we have experienced the change of the Department of World Mission into the Commission on Church Cooperation. Thus partnership has its bearing also in making structural changes in order to further the unity and the development of proclamation, witness and service.

For the churches in Asia the great new fact of our time is the break with some of the traditional Western theological concepts as they seek to respond to these challenges within their different cultures. The new terminology used for this nowadays is not so much "indigenization" but "contextualization". Contextualization while not ignoring "the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of a traditional culture" (indigenization) also takes into account the process of secularization, economic development, technology and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical moment of most Asian

countries. In this regard Dr. Shoki Coe from Taiwan mentioned that a careful distinction should be made between authentic and false forms of contextualization. He stated: "False contextualization yields to uncritical accommodation, a form of culture faith. Authentic contextualization is always prophetic, arising out of a genuine encounter between God's World and His world and moves towards the purpose of challenging and changing the situation. It is therefore clear that contextualization is a dynamic (and) not a static process. It recognises the continually changing nature of every human situation and the possibility for change, thus opening the way for the future". (2)

It would be a very alarming misunderstanding if contextualization of theology were taken to mean simply to take context or ecology seriously and then adjust theology to fit in. It is also unfortunate that too often it is the changing world conditions that seem to be the factor which forces the Church to re-examine its theology and mission, rather than the Church through its "being the salt of the world" and, its "being the light of the world", guiding and transforming the world into the Way, the Truth, and the Life in Jesus Christ.

The principle of Partnership in Mission seems to be clearly recognised and accepted without controversy, based upon the one foundation of mission, the development of the ecumenical movement, and the urgent need to meet the challenge of the world in all its scientific and theological achievements and development.

However, there is still much uncertainty and confusion as to what we actually mean by Mission, and some "controversies" have come into the open during recent ecumenical gatherings. The basic differences of opinion seem to centre around the basis, the scope and the goal of mission. The objective of the International Congress on World Evangelization, July 16-25, 1974 in Lausanne, Switzerland, was primarily to implement strategies and programmes for the task of fulfilling the "Great Commission". In many aspects it served as a criticism of some pronouncements and statements made by the World Council of Churches or/and other World Confessional Bodies.

Even as early as the Fourth W.C.C. Assembly at Uppsala (1968), there seemed to be a difference of opinion between the so-called "ecumenicals" and the "evangelicals" with regard to the content and meaning of mission, or, shall we say, between the so-called "horizontalists" and the "verticalists". This, in passing, is just an illustration that "Partnership for Mission", may be the imperative and the aspiration, but that differences of interpretation can be very divisive. We should be very careful in this regard especially in Asia,

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(2) Gerald H. Anderson (Ed.), *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*, New York, Orbis Books, 1976, page 4.

where according to the traditional Eastern "politeness", one succumbs easily to a "syncretistic view", in order to come to an agreement or consensus, and to avoid conflicts.

The "Frankfurt Declaration", first signed by eleven German theologians, has pronounced "Seven Indispensable Basic Elements of Mission", which I think deserved serious attention.

Some of the statements made are, for example: (3)

1. Christian Mission discovers its foundation, goals, task and the content of its proclamation solely in the commission of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and His saving acts as they are reported by the witness of the apostles and early Christianity in the New Testament. Mission is grounded in the nature of the Gospel. (Matt. 28: 18-20)
2. The first and supreme goal of mission is the glorification of the name of the one God throughout the entire world and the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, His Son. (Ezeliel 38: 23; Ps. 18: 49; Rom. 15: 9)
3. Jesus Christ our Saviour, true God and true man, as the Bible proclaims him in his personal mystery and His saving work, in the basis, content, and authority of mission. It is the goal of this mission to make known to all people in all walks of life the gift of his salvation. (Acts. 4: 12)
4. Mission is the witness and the presentation of eternal salvation performed in the name of Jesus Christ by His Church and fully authorised messengers by means of preaching the sacraments and service. This salvation is due to the sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which occurred once for all and for all mankind. (John 3: 16; II Cor. 5: 20)
5. Missionary proclamation should lead everywhere to the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ, which exhibits a new, defined reality as salt and light in its social environment. The primary visible task of mission is to call out the messianic saved community from all the people. (1 Pet. 2: 9; Rom. 12: 2)
6. The offer of salvation is directed without exception to all men who are not yet bound to him in conscious faith. The adherents to the non-Christian religions and world views can receive this salvation only through participation in faith. They must let themselves be freed from their former ties and false hopes in order to be admitted by belief and baptism into the body of Christ. (Eph. 2: 11, 12)

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(3) Peter Beyerhaus, *Missions: Which Way?*  
 Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1971. pp. 107-120.  
 Contains the full text of the "Frankfurt Declaration".

7. The Christian World Mission is the decisive, continuous saving activity of God among men between the time of the resurrection and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, new nations and people will progressively be called to decide for or against Christ.  
(Matt. 24: 14)

We see that the above declaration wants to stress emphatically the distinction between Evangelization and social action. It is opposed to tendencies in World Mission to determine the nature and task of mission by socio-political analysis of the current world situation, and from the demands of the non-Christian world.

In spite of some differences of interpretation of the nature, scope and method of doing mission, we have the same Lord and Head of that mission. Especially those churches which are gathered together in one of the confessional groups should be closely united in fellowship, proclamation, witness and service, thus avoiding sinful individualism, unfair competition, and wasteful duplications.

The churches in Asia, especially the Lutheran churches in Asia, are urged to develop regional and functional cooperation for the furtherance of the church mission, for strategic planning, for mutual encouragement, and for the sharing of finance, personnel and experience. However, here also a world of prudence and caution is needed. Regional and global forms of partnership are all-important, but one should not forget: "Mission, like charity, begins at home". Partnership itself is witness to unity and strategy for mission at the same time. (John 17: 21, 23; Eph. 4: 3, 4; Phil. 1: 27)

This partnership should be started right in our own surroundings.

We can be all so nicely united in the Lutheran World Federation and meet each other in World Assemblies, International and Regional Consultations and Conferences. But should there not be first of all among the Lutheran churches in a particular area mutual recognition amounting to intercommunion and pulpit fellowship?

In Indonesia with the 5 Lutheran churches (members of the LWF) constituting ca. 2 million of the ca. 11 million Christian of Indonesia, there is, as yet among the Lutherans no joint Theological School nor joint radio station, nor any formal cooperative structure for joint action. Last October, for the fourth time in 1976, group conversion to Islam occurred among the Karo Batak tribe in North Sumatra, a province where six of the bigger Protestant denominations of Indonesia have their headquarters! (4)

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(4) Sinar Indonesia Baru (SIB), a Medan daily, October 20, 1976, page 2.

Another form of mission is "Home-mission" à la Asia, not in the Western sense of the world. Most families in the bigger towns and in cities in Indonesia are used to having a servant helping in their homes. Most of these male and female servants are non-Christians. If all the hundreds of thousands of Christian families in cities and towns, would sincerely and faithfully take up their missionary responsibility with regard to their servants, it could mean an addition of several hundred thousands of new converts every year through this kind of "Home mission". The places where the battles are first to be fought are in the local areas. However, there are indeed as many reasons for Regional Partnership for Mission in Asia!

God has placed us in the Asian Continent among people and nations which more or less have been dominated by former colonial and/or capitalistic nations from the West. We have many features in common. We all live in countries where Christianity (except for the Philippines) is a minority religion, and where in the minds of non-Christians there are still the remnants of a tendency to relate Christianity to foreign power and former colonial administrations.

We must also acknowledge that many of the leaders of the Christian churches in Asia seem to be more acquainted with conditions and the history of churches in the West than with the churches in neighbouring nations of Asia, where as biblically speaking it is our prior duty to know and love our near-neighbours.

Inter-church aid and the amount of financial support from abroad, although important and much needed, should not be our criteria for close relationship.

We are also aware of the fact that there is a tremendous growth of the population in Asia through natural increase, which in the long run will diminish the already small percentage of Christians into a very tiny minority, if there is no strong church growth through mission.

It is then the God-given task of Asian churches to develop, in these specific and difficult situations, new strategies and pioneering methods. In facing the national cultures based upon "glorification of the past" and aspects of national or political ideologies which place "obedience to the state above obedience to God", Asian churches and Christian bodies should proclaim Promise and Judgment.

The Lutheran churches of Asia should start in all sincerity with a joint study of the meaning of Mission in regard to theology, practice and strategy in its setting.

All the Lutheran churches of Asia should give a concrete "Strategy Report" covering vital information: such items as the definition of mission; the existence of "pockets" of unreached people; the need for special personnel; the availability of skilled personnel; hindrances and obstacles for evangelization; existing government policies with regard to the exchange of mission-personnel; methods and strategy being used by the particular church, and other important statistical data.

For all these some type of an agency or regional cooperative body to promote the partnership, study and research, planning and strategy is needed in the Asian context.

A united institution for the training and the preparation of missionary personnel may be needed. An institution of this kind should take seriously into consideration questions like, for example:

- the inclusion of "anthropological studies" into the training of missionaries and pastors from/in Asia.
- how to avoid one century of "Western missions mistakes"?
- Are Asian church leaders also aware of existing enormous culture gaps, which yawn between some Asian cultures; and how to over-bridge these.

The APAS programme founded in 1975 should help to strengthen the witness of the churches in their respective area situations, and in wider regional interaction.

The study of Asian religions, especially the cultures of Asia according to their regions is of special concern. For cultures are never merely neutral concerning religion. Especially in Asia, religion and culture penetrate each other often to a high degree. In some churches of Asia we can even speak of an interface between Christianity and culture.

Furthermore there is the need for mass communication and publication strategy. The Church is the Body of Christ entrusted with the task of the communication of the Word of God to all nations and all peoples. It is obvious that the Church as servant and communicator of salvation and judgment should be engaged in the front lines of mass communication, and publication. It is regrettable that such vital means as radio and T.V. programmes for the communication of the faith in Jesus Christ are not yet rightly understood and exploited to the full by the churches in Asia. Because Christians are in the minority and churches are in many instances hindered or prohibited to conduct

public evangelization, evangelization through radio and television is the best means to break through the walls of isolation, caused by cleavages in social, cultural, historical or religio-political context.

It is time that radio stations be set up in several regions, after careful study and research. In the "pockets" of Christian churches surrounded by strongholds of non-Christians, such as is the situation in Indonesia, this form of mass-media is much needed. The Christian radio station is needed in the first place for straightforward Gospel proclamation, but similarly important is its usefulness in communicating and informing activities of the church, and for continuing education purposes. It is very encouraging that the Lutheran Church of Australia has expanded its "Lutheran Hour" radio evangelization programme into Indonesia, by buying time from the "Elshinta" radio station in Jakarta.

The cry for "moratorium" by certain groups is acceptable only if by that is meant that the churches, especially in Asia (and the whole so-called Third World), are prepared, ready and willing to take over, to continue and to develop the God-given responsibilities for proclamation, witness and service in mission. The question of moratorium should on all sides sound the warning, that there is a tendency among many Christians to put stress on the glorification of her status as the new (independent church) "people of God", and neglect their newly achieved status as the "servant of God". It must also lead to a realistic strengthening of leadership and church growth.

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As was pointed out before, the Body of Christ in all ages and at all places is referred to as the "Church Universal". Each congregation in all its unity and its diversity of denominational structure and confessional uniqueness is soon as the manifestation of the "Church Universal". The common unity of Faith in Jesus Christ, the common commission for the proclamation of the Gospel, the challenge to the Church in the world, and the unity of mankind, requires a world-wide organisation among the churches, for Proclamation, Witness and Service.

The word "ecumenical" points, on the one hand, to the churches and their togetherness and on the other hand, to the secular world, its histories, and its history. "When one denomination speaks of its world spread and its world-wide task and calls itself ecumenical, the implication of the togetherness is absent. When churches use the word ecumenical for any organization or programme which is not concerned with Christian witness in and to the world, the other implication is absent". (5)

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(5) D.T. Niles, *The Message and its Messengers*  
London, Carey Kingsgate Press, 1967, page 33.

Geographical location, culture and circumstances may differ from one location to another, from one continent to another, but the Church's mission is the same: to proclaim, and witness to the salvation brought in Jesus Christ, that through the power of the Holy Spirit men may believe and put their trust in Him as Lord and Saviour.

The basic function of the World Council of Churches was, for example, stated as the following: "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe". (6)

Closely related and united with the W.C.C. are the many Regional Conferences of Churches (such as the CCA, Christian Conference of Asia), and the National Council of Churches together with the growing cooperation of churches in Regional Councils within one nation, and the many local Coordinating Bodies for cooperative action in towns and cities.

At a time when human interdependence is so evident, it is all the more imperative to form visible bonds uniting Christians also in Universal and Global fellowship. We are need to know and comprehend together the ministry of reconciliation, the prophetic ministry and service and be strengthened by them as together we engage in worldwide cooperation and fellowship. We all need the sharing of information, resources, personnel and finance and to learn to work together from the centre of the commitment of the churches engaged in koinonia, marturia and diaconia all over the world.

The exchange of missionary personnel and resources among Asian people (and to Asian people in other parts of the world) is of very great importance. For example: the many Chinese people in Sumatra could best be reached by the use of Chinese missionaries, both from the already existing Chinese churches in Java, as well as by Chinese Christians from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Thousands and thousands of Javanese are living in North Sumatra, many of them descendants of plantation workers, brought to Sumatra during the colonial regime. They are right in the backyard of the big Lutheran churches of Indonesia. Why should not Javanese missionaries from the churches of West, Central and East Java be invited to evangelize in the region through exchange of personnel between the respective churches?

Along the same line we can mention the fact that there are many Asian people living in other parts of the world. Missionary personnel and pastors from Asia should be commissioned to work there. The initiative should be taken by the Asian churches themselves. They must act as the sending churches now!

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(6) David Enderton Johnson (Ed.), Uppsala to Nairobi, 1968-1975, New York, Friendship Press, 1975, page 23.

Our vision should be broad and deep enough to see the regional and global responsibilities of the Church. Christians in one nation should not only evangelize in their own country, but bring the Gospel to all people. World or global missions means continued and increased sending of partners for mission from every church in every land to the unreached people, in ever-growing "koinonia" or fellowship of believers in Christ. Some areas cannot be directly evangelized by their Christian neighbours because of some historical events in the past or of linguistic, political and cultural chasms. It will be very hard to reach them by "near neighbour evangelism". Here is the place for sharing in personnel both nationally, regionally, and globally.

However, mission to Muslim areas for example can be done best through Christians who have lived from childhood in the midst of Muslim people. Formerly, our "professors" and "specialists" in Islamic countries like Indonesia (85 percent Islam) were from "Christian" Europe. Their background, vision and approach will naturally differ very much from that of Christians who lived for years among Muslims.

Asia as the region of the "birth" of Christianity and the great non-Christian religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and related religions, ought to produce Christian "experts" in the strategy of reaching followers of those non-Christian religions in the world, to become followers of Christ.

World mission stands on the threshhold of unique opportunities. The present situation calls for a well co-ordinated strategy of mission.

The World Council of Churches, as well as the world confessional bodies (such as the L.W.F.), are still needed to provide leadership for common strategy and to serve for giving directions and pointers for the future, giving new interpretations and methods as to the ever-widening varieties of proclamation, witness and service needed by the world.

They especially are needed and are called upon to be faithful centres for interpretation and communication of the Gospel: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They should not exist to reflect the concerns of member churches only, but must lead the churches with a prophetic voice into a fresh understanding and realization of the Mission of the Church. The L.W.F., for example, is an agent to:

- a. Further a united witness before the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God for salvation.
- b. Cultivate unity of faith and confession among the Lutheran churches of the world.

- c. Develop fellowship and cooperation in study among Lutherans.
- d. Foster Lutheran interest in, concern for, and participation in ecumenical movements.
- e. Support Lutheran churches and groups as they endeavour to meet the spiritual needs of other Lutherans and to extend the Gospel.
- f. Provide a channel for Lutheran churches and groups to help meet physical needs.

Perhaps we can agree that although world organisations will always be needed, the future lies more in smaller organised units on a national and regional scale, with strong, defined and limited goals, and a stronger measure of fundamental agreement among the participants. This of course, poses new questions with regard to the types of responsibilities to be undertaken by regional and global bodies, and what the implications are for the structure of regional and world bodies.

World confessional bodies, especially the L.W.F., have in the past also acted as "mediators" in healing the wounds of schisms among churches of the same confession and provided a place for reconciliatory cooperation.

In closing, a word of warning must be said with regard to "partnership for mission" both within the regional and global context.

There is always the danger that in order to maximize "unity" and socio-political involvement, the "vertical"/spiritual dimensions can be overshadowed by the "horizontal" ones. This will result in blurring distortions of the Church's mission. We ought to be continually reminded that the primary mission is: "The proclamation of the Gospel as well as the witness and the service grounded in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Its aim is: that the name of God be glorified and sinful men become heirs of the salvation and redemption in Jesus Christ in accordance with God's plan of salvation: ..... that whoever believes has eternal life". (7)

Dr. Sutan M. Hutagalung

# Comment on Regional and Global Partnership for Mission

## I. What I heard Dr. Hutagalung saying:

### A. "Partnership for Mission"

1. Denotes the rediscovery of our common Christian task.
2. Stresses the urgency of the missionary task of the Church.
3. Indicates that God is raising up the so-called "younger churches" as new resources for world evangelization.
4. Demonstrates that the gift and responsibility to do mission work belongs to the whole body of Christ.
5. Urges all churches to reach all peoples both in their own area and other parts of the world.
6. Needs new structure and new strategy.
7. Calls for the unity and cooperation of the churches.

### B. "Mission in Asia" should call us to be aware of these facts:

1. Asia is a great continent which is composed of many countries and has a vast difference of people and culture.
2. Most of the people and nations in Asia had been dominated by the colonial and/or capitalistic nations from the West.
3. In most of the countries in Asia Christianity is a minority religion and in the minds of the non-Christians they still tend to relate Christianity to foreign powers and former colonial administrations.
4. Leaders of the churches in Asia seem to know more about the conditions and history of the churches in the West than the churches in their own neighbouring countries in Asia.
5. The tremendous growth of the population in Asia through natural increase, in the long run, will diminish the already small percentage of Christians into a very tiny minority if there is no strong church growth through mission work.
6. The churches in Asia mostly still depend upon the Western churches both in finance and personnel.

7. There are many Asians living in other parts of the world, they too, would be easier to be reached by the Asian Christians.

C. "Regional and Global" Mission

1. "Mission, like charity, begins at home".
2. Mission should be started right in our own surroundings, in our own city, province, country.
3. Mission in our own surroundings should involve the whole Body of Christ - all people of God, including all Lutherans as well as Christians belonging to other denominations.
4. We should join together to have a "Home Mission" in Asia.
5. "Home Mission" includes the reaching of our own servants, our own kinsmen and our own relatives.
6. We should join with the churches in other parts of the world to reach the Asians who live in their respective areas.
7. The Great Commission calls for us to go into all the world, now especially in the Western world for it is full of missionaries of other religions from Asia, the churches in the West just don't know how to deal with them.

II. What I heard Dr. Hutagalung calling to our attention:

A. Mission is an Essential Function of the Church

1. We should re-examine and re-evaluate our missionary responsibility and role.
2. This should be done in "partnership in obedience".
3. Partnership of the churches should be developed on the local sub-regional, national, regional (such as Asia, Africa etc.) and world cooperation of churches both in interdenominational (WCC) and the confessional organisations (LWF).
4. Mission should be done in the spirit as "Servant of God".

B. Mission in Asia should be Contextualized

1. Contextualization should not ignore the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of a traditional culture (indigenization), but also take into account the process of secularization, economic development, technology and the struggle for human justice.

2. Contextualization should not yield to the uncritical accommodation and thereby become a form of cultural faith - false contextualization.
3. Authentic contextualization is always prophetic, arising out of a genuine encounter between God's Word and His world and moves towards the purpose of challenging and changing the situation.
4. Asian Christians should have initiative in Mission and contextualizing it.

C. Differences of interpretation of the Content and Meaning of Mission need not be Divisive

1. We have the same Lord and Head of the Mission.
2. Lutheran churches of Asia should start a joint study of the meaning of Mission in regard to theology, practice and strategy in its setting.
3. A united institution for training missionary personnel is needed.
4. Our mission is three-fold: Proclamation, Witness, and Service.

D. Other Practical Aspects

1. APAS should be strengthened.
2. The study of Asian religions is in need of development.
3. There is a need for mass communication and publication strategy as well as carrying it out.
4. The exchange of missionary personnel and resources among Asian people and other parts of the world is of very great importance:
  - a) Many Chinese in Sumatra are in need of Chinese missionaries.
  - b) Javanese in North Sumatra too, are in need of Javanese missionaries.
  - c) You can think of many others also.
5. Mission to Muslim areas can be done best through Christians who have lived from childhood in the midst of Muslim people.
6. In order to achieve the mission of God, churches in Asia should be aware of the interdependence of the churches while struggling for the church's independence - "Missionaries Go Home" may not be the best solution to the problem.

7. The churches should share their gifts and responsibilities; "every church is both the giver and receiver". In this respect, LWF is of great importance - as mediator, reconciler, and taking the leadership role.

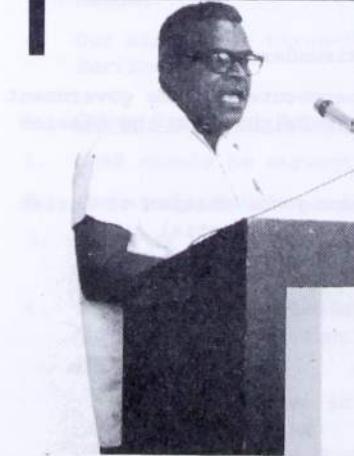
III. What I want to challenge the Conference and the Constituencies of the Members of the Conference as well as the Speaker.

- A. Yes, We should Share our Resources, but do We really Care?
  1. Do we really care for those who are perishing daily because they do know Jesus Saviour of the world?
  2. Do we really care for the many who are sick, who are poor, who are oppressed by all forms of injustice?
- B. Are we Really Willing to Bear the Burdens?
  1. The burdens of reaching out?
  2. The burdens of others who are caring for the mission of God?
- C. Will We Really Dare?
  1. Dare to take the risk of being misunderstood?
  2. Dare to take the risk of being persecuted by the government or church politics because you are faithful to the mission of God?

Yes, caring, sharing, bearing and daring the mission of Christ our resurrected Saviour is very vital and essential in the regional and global partnership for Mission in Asia!

Rev. Andrew Chiu

*An attentive group of participants listening in the plenary session.*



*Dr. P. Prabhudas (Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, India) presenting his paper on "Self-Reliance or Creative Discipleship" (page 109).*



*Rev. Gideon Chang of the Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore addresses the Conference.*

# Lutheranism in the Context of Ecumenism in Asia

## INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Why am I still Lutheran? What is the reason of my membership in the Lutheran church? What does Lutheranism mean for Lutheran churches? Should Lutherans be interested more in the overall "Lutheran" solidarity rather than in local participation in and responsibility for common witness and service in carrying out the ecumenical life? Must Lutherans be custodians for the Lutheran heritage and tradition? What specific contribution can Lutheranism make to ecumenism in Asia? How are Lutherans influenced by working together in ecumenism with other churches in Asia? What ecumenical strategy should Lutheran Churches in Asia follow? Will the Lutheran confessional identity be lost by worldwide ecumenicity? Could the specific marks of the Lutheran church genuinely be maintained among non-Lutheran churches?

### I. USE OF THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGY AND ITS ADHERENCE TO ECUMENISM IN ASIA

1. This paper is not dealing primarily with a theological, theoretical presentation, but it is rather a serious attempt to understand Lutheranism in the context of ecumenism in Asia. We frequently use much time talking about ecclesiologizing, planning and organizing the church, but little about humanizing theology, anthropologizing and ecumenizing the church. Theoretically speaking, there is a tremendous variety of theological endeavors being noticed since the sixties years, which brought out some theological thoughts, i.e. the theology of hope, the theology of shalom, the theology of liberation, the theology of revolution, the so called "black-theology", "the yellow-theology", "the brown-theology", "the buffalo-theology", the peasant-theology", and so on.
2. It seems to me that high-level theological agreements do not play an important role in achieving the ecumenical spirit among churches in Asia. Practical viewpoints of the churches in many countries in Asia on overcoming man's human suffering and death can bring Asian people to the process of coming together. Especially on a local and practical level, Lutheran congregations in each country in Asia can cooperate in various ways with congregations and Christians of other confessions.

3. Luther's interest was not that he produced out of the Scriptures high level theological statements which sounded academically, theologically and theoretically. Luther has always tried to be much more interesting and practical, and his theology was directed in a "down-to-earth" manner. Luther's understanding of the Scriptures was never merely academic. He was firmly convinced that God spoke to man in the Scriptures both humanly and locally. Luther always examined and viewed the Scriptures as a Christian theologian, whose chief and bounden duty was to discover God's clear message of salvation in them (the Scriptures) and to proclaim this message in a human manner to fallen men. He wrote in 1533: The Word of God is the greatest, most necessary, and most sublime part of Christendom (LW 38,189).

The sermon work of Luther is still very stimulated and edifying even today. Luther's sermons are also outstandingly practical, dealing with the human problems and needs of men in his day.

4. The adherence to and use of the Lutheran theology is relevant for churches in Asia in several aspects:

- i. it tropologizes (rooted in Luther's sensus tropologicus - from Greek word tropos = manner of life, the way in which, tropophorew = I endure the ways/dispositions of) a lively proclamation of the Gospel for the natural and indigenous elements in the various cultural regions of Asia.
- ii. it helps people within their multireligious and multidenominational situation to understand the word of the living God by their own feelings and cultural standards (Indication of Luther's theology by German folk-way).

5. In the history of Reformation the five features or characteristics of the church as quoted by Luther have oft been interpreted as the strict bounderies between the Reformation Church and the Roman Catholic Church, and later on also from other churches. By these five characteristics of the Church the sanctified (holy people) are recognized. These five characteristics of the Church according to Luther are

- i. the possession of the holy Word of God
- ii. the holy Sacrament of Baptism
- iii. the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
- iv. the office of the keys
- v. the office of the holy Ministry (LW 41; 148, etc.)

The Reformer Martin Luther did not intend any ecclesiastical indepence from the Roman Catholic Church for his reformation. He had in mind the purpose of the renewal of the whole church.

For us today this means that Lutherans should be able to recognize the presence of Jesus Christ in the other churches in which people accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

It is clear that the expressions of Christian faith are different amongst racial and national groups because of the influence of the particular cultural and social settings of their lives. As a matter of fact, Christians in Asia express their faith in various ways because they live in different cultural and social settings. Difficulties raised by multi-racial situations and confessional divisions are no excuse for the Lutheran churches to ignore their responsibilities towards ecumenism. At that time, the believers did not think of themselves as founders of a new Church, but as renewers of the one, holy catholic, and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

6. In the Lutheran Confession it is stated that the essential features of the Church are that the Church is wherever the word is preached and the sacraments are administered according to the scriptures. What are the implications of this statement for the people in Asia today? The ecumenical aspect of these characteristics can be seen from the community of the preaching-hearer, and such community express a deepest human solidarity and love. According to Luther's theology of Holy Communion, the spiritual life grows out of common worship as the heart of the Lutheran communion. The crucified and risen Lord himself meets human beings through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. This encounter is the main source of strength for the Lutheran people in their service towards ecumenism. Lutheranism as the result of the renewal of the Catholicity of the Church is committed to work for the well being of all members of society, regardless of confession, denomination, ecclesiastic structure, race, nationality or political conviction.
7. Lutheranism is not a closed community. The full value of the Lutheranism may become clear when Lutheranism is ready to work together with non-Lutheranism. A common commitment in ecumenism could provide a good opportunity to learn the two-sided Christian that he himself doesn't belong to the world, but yet is a man not taken out of the world (John 17). Luther was a typical example of the two-sided Christian that he so often described himself as simul iustus et peccator, a man declared righteous before God by faith in Christ and with his sins forgiven in Christ, but a man who was at the same time still a sinner before God and in need of daily forgiveness.

The communion that Jesus had with tax collectors, sinners, outcasts and the lowly and the weak made Luther aware that he could not advocate or consider the execution of the Anabaptists or their drowning as a scornful and drastic rejection of their views on Baptism.

8. Luther had been aware of the responsibility for education to particular "folksiest" nation through catechetical education. One of the greatest work in Luther's reformation was the publication of his catechism. Luther worked out the Scriptures to be the great catechismal texts for the church. This became the basis of Luther's spirituality and became a folksiest daily Christian book as guideline for people's spiritual life. Luther had been considering the general aspects of the folksiest people in performing his catechetical task. Luther's theology of the ten commandments pointed out that the second table of commandments regulate man's relations with each other. The second table can give shape to the internal individual ecumenism with each other.

## II. LUTHERANISM IN THE CONTEXT OF ECUMENISM IN ASIA

9. Lutherans do affirm these statements. "In Christ, god destroys the dividing power of sin and establishes a new community between himself and humanity. In this community, he also breaks down the division between people. Belonging to a particular religious, ideological, national, or cultural group is no longer of ultimate importance and ceases to be a cause of separation. What matters more is that all human beings, regardless of their background, are God's beloved sons and daughters. All are of equal worth before him" (In Christ - A new Community. A Study Guide in Preparation for the Sixth Assembly of the LWF in June 1977 in Tanzania, p. 41). But it cannot be denied that the practices of many churches do not always reflect these affirmations. Sometimes our congregations are not open communities with room for everyone.
10. The affirmation of Christ's whole human being was the central element to Luther's understanding of oneness. Lutheranism which emphasizes the humility and humanity of Jesus Christ (theologia crucis), must not exclude non-Lutherans and people of other confessions. Lutheranism in its various forms is an attempt to overcome the divisions in society by building a community in which all people share equally in the gift of God. Lutheran churches therefore are not only partners who share in Lutheran heritage and in common witness, they also are partners to non-Lutheran churches and could have much to learn from other confessions.

11. Lutheranism in the context of ecumenism in Asia has to play the role of initiating, motivating, instructing the unsophisticated proclamation of the Gospel by unsophisticated people in the local communities without the need for a highly ministry-education and for an expensive costs.  
Lutheranism in the context of ecumenism in Asia should support even the non-denominational revival movements in local countries in Asia. Probably any churches (at least in Indonesia) are weary of the divisions between the different church's orders and are asking for unconditional unity in ecclesiastical level.  
Lutherans and non-Lutherans sometimes are not so very aware of a central conviction of Lutheran theology that agreement on matters of organization and structure is not essential for the true unity of the Church.  
For us Lutherans, historical confessional division cannot be regarded only as a negative factor for ecumenical life.
12. Luther's care in Christian Education became the common concern of all Christian families. In that case Luther's home and family life was a very happy one and outstandingly exemplary. Luther's reformation within Christian Education brought out the worldwide educational task of the church.  
Discussing Lutheranism in the context of ecumenism in Asia, it should be taken into consideration that Christian Education belongs in ecumenical programmes. It is commendable if Lutheran churches in Asia make Christian Education their special concern in ecumenical activity.  
"Two-self" or the selfhood of the church should be added to the "three-self" formula (the well-known Venn-Anderson "three-self" formula) to describe the ecumenical selfhood of the church. These "two-self" of the selfhood of the church are "self-educating" and "self-communicating". The self, in case of the "self-educating" compels Christians to educate themselves and the whole people, and this "self-educating" urges churches and people to find out ecumenical cooperation in the task of education.  
The self, in case of the "self-communicating" creates a mutual relationship and brings about inter relationship among churches and people of other confessions. To communicate oneself and to be communicated with means a real sharing with one another.
13. Education for ecumenism means promoting ecumenical communication. Education for ecumenism also means overcoming narrowness of outlook, focusing on those aspects of the Christian faith which are universally valid. Especially in a situation where Christians are in a minority. Through education it is possible for Christians to meet with people of other faiths.

Education for ecumenism is part of the wider effort to make the services of Lutheranism active in the lives of all people, and as such it is integrally related to every purpose of every congregation.

14. One of the objects Luther's catechetical work was the emphasis on spirituality and life. Luther's reformation accented this factor of spirituality and life and this gives directive to collaborative ecumenical actions. Because of this strong emphasis of Luther's catechetical work Lutheran churches in Asia should, together with other churches pay greater attention to the education of christian family life.
15. Christian Education might be a starting point for ecumenism in many Asian countries so that churches and people of other confessions can make joint action in the educational sphere. This is necessary for the well being of all people and an ecumenical group of churches in a large area of each country in Asia could make a considerable contribution to education both strictly christian and otherwise.

### III. LUTHERAN ATTEMPTS AS PRIOR EFFORTS IN ECUMENISM IN ASIA

16. We might define "ecumenism" in Asia as "the ecumenical manner in which churches confess their faith and establish their historical existence in dialogue with their own environment". The word "in the context of ecumenism in Asia" means also "Asian context". Ecumenism in Asian context should refer not only to the Christian community in which the individual Christian stands, but also to the local folk tradition, the classical culture, the impact of modern secular culture, and the socio-political environment with which the Christian community must be in constant touch.
17. Borrowing the three interrelated principles formulated by the directors of Christian Study Centres in Asia at their meeting in Kyoto in 1971, in guiding ecumenity in an Asian context, Lutheran churches have to pay attention particularly to "dynamic accomodation", "critical confrontation" and "positive transformation". "Dynamic accomodation" involves an understanding and appreciation of values and structures which enable the Christian to live as an accepted member of society. "Critical confrontation" implies that the Gospel brings certain aspect of the culture under judgement as alien or opposed in spirit to the demands of the Gospel. "Positive transformation" implies that negative aspects of the culture are to be creatively transformed.

18. Luther's emphasis on fellowship through worship and spiritual life, urges Christians to have fellowship beyond confessional boundaries. This could be a spotlight to illuminate more realistic ecumenical activities. Understanding Luther's emphasis on fellowship, it is true to point out that ecumenicity is concerned about mankind, and therefore, it must be concerned about the poor, the oppressed, the weak, about government development, about injustice, oppression and about situational instability.
19. It should be clearly brought out here that the ecumenical understanding of Luther himself was not the confessional understanding, but the role of the confession must be seen to be identified with the life of the wider community in which the confessing people live.  
The concern for mankind could be expressed in the ecumenical movement. Ecumenism of life which is rooted in cultural life will find its cultural identity, and this will defend the importance of cultural continuity for the identity of Christians in their life.
20. Ecumenism began in Roman cultural environment. It is quite natural to expect, therefore, that a similar pattern will follow as the ecumenism confronts more directly the life patterns of particular Asian cultures.  
Man is right in saying that Christianity in the past seemed to many people, particularly to non-Christians, as an "potted plant" which has been transported to Asia without having been transplanted in Asian soil. Herewith the full statement by D. T. Niles is quoted : "The Gospel is a seed sown in the soil of culture. The plant bears the mark both of the seed and the soil. There is one Gospel, there are many 'Christianities'. In Asian countries, Christianity is a potted plant which needs to be rooted in the culture soil of the East" (D.T. Niles as quoted in Chandran Devanesen, *The Cross is lifted*. New York 1954, p.11)
21. Instead of mentioning "Lutheran Ecumenism" I like to speak of "Asian Ecumenism", or more accurately to say "Asian ecumenical thinking". "Asian ecumenical thinking" can be also termed "Asian consciousness" and "Asian solidarity". Asian countries have had the common experience of having only recently emerged out of colonial domination. They share the common experience of being the grip of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and all the allied social evils we meet in Asia today.
22. Related to this common experience, which has to be solved by all the Christian churches in Asia as a common task, is the action of 'ecumenical humanism'. It is called thus because it is the responsibility and concern of the whole of Christianity to minister to the needs of all the people who call for human help.

23. Ecumenism in Asia should contain what might be called "the ecumene of life". It means the sharing of life, its experiences, prayers, common reflections, cooperations in trying to build more human communities, and developing Asian communitarian man. This is in accordance with Luther's concept of God's people (communio sanctorum).
24. The search for ecumenicity in Asia is a search for Asian-ness, Asian systems, values even in indigenous arts and music. It has to be considered in the village setting and in rural communities amongst other ethnic groups which make the effective elements in ecumenical life. The task of Lutheranism, in the context of ecumenism in Asia related to indigenous settings, is to search for, and to survive various set backs in the cultural life of the people. Understanding the cultural framework of Asian people will help give meaning to the "Asian ecumenical thinking".
25. We know that one of the main issues in Luther's theology was the doctrine of justification. There is clear implication of this doctrine for social, political and economic living. I think therefore, special effort should be initiated to meet/counter the causes of social and economic injustice from the point of view of the relationship between the rich and the poorer countries and of the role of the church in Asian countries. Social and economic development must be regarded as an ecumenical effort.
26. While in the Asian socio-economic situation marked by massive poverty, underdevelopment, situations of injustice and political instability, ecumenical thinking and its outcome of activity should be directed towards solving these problems.
27. It is remarkable to note the many examples of Luther's deep concern for people in trouble or need. Widows and needy students were always objects of very serious concern of Luther's part.  
In relation to Luther's concern for needy students. Lutheran Churches in Asia must include in their ecumenical efforts services to the many needy students in many countries who are now moving to demand an answer to the great uncertainty they face about their future.
28. Lutheranism in Asia as an ecumenical effort to develop social and economic life must make a serious attempt to assist rural populations to try new agricultural methods and to face the choice between expensive technological solutions and cheaper labour intensive approaches.

29. Churches in Asia live as minorities in an environment dominated by other religions. For that reason, Lutheranism in the context of wider ecumenism in Asia has to advance an inter-religious dialogue as a particular way. The Lutheran should attempt to make ecumenism in Asia extend beyond Christian denominations with their theological and organizational pre-occupations, and should reach out to all the cultural and religious traditions of Asian countries. Asian ecumenism therefore must have wider connotations than in other continents.
30. Lutheranism in the context of ecumenism in Asia must try to make a constructive contribution to the whole development of the ecumenical movement. The idea of the so called "Synode Gereja di Indonesia (Synogi)" (Synodical Council of Churches in Indonesia) may be seen as one step on the way to a deepest ecumenism in Indonesia. Is that possible that Lutheran churches in Asia could stimulate other non-Lutheran churches in Asia to set up the so called "Synodical of Churches in Asia" (SCCA)?
31. Above we have seen that the Lutheran confession is one of the crucial viewpoints for some Lutherans and non-Lutherans to solve in the question of ecumenism in Asia. But there are still problems that the Churches in Asia have to face. One of these is the problem of language which sometimes forms a cultural barrier against an ecumenical attempt. In solving this problem it would be advisable to divide the Asian countries into language regions, for Indonesia-Malaysian and Singapore the Indonesian language would be a common one. In the Philippines, India, Sri-Langka, Australia, New Zealand, English would be the common language. For Hong Kong and Taiwan, Chinese would be the medium. For Korea and Japan it would have to be each national language and for the other Indo Chinese Countries a search for a common language would have to be made.
32. There are already 31 points which we will discuss later on but there is no point relating to the Theological Education performed by the Lutheran Churches in Asia. in point 1 it is stated that "this paper is not dealing primarily with a theological and theoretical presentation". But this statement doesn't mean that ecumenical cooperation in theological education is not necessary. To make ecumenical action more biblical-effective. it must be aimed towards more ecumenical cooperation amongst the theological education carried out by the Lutheran Churches in Asia. APAS will be a good channel for investigating the systems of religious and traditional cultural values in the various Asian countries.

The LWF/APAS Theological Conference in Manila, 21-24 Oct. 1976 recommended that we Lutherans in Asia have to "encourage the use of APAS resources for researching problems relating to church and society in any given locals. Research results (field reports, these, etc.) of general interest should be shared with the churches via the APAS directors". Sharing the APAS results and resources will stimulate churches and seminaries in their ecumenical endeavours and strengthen them to live together in the spirit of the ecumenical life.

Initiating the ecumenical efforts of Lutherans in Asia will be more successful if the ecumenicity is aimed in two directions. One is to the local level of ecumenical and congregational activity; the other one to the wider international ecumenical activity in Asia.

Here LWF could provide a channel for Asian groups to foster interest in, concern for, and participation in ecumenical movements. LWF could help Lutheran churches in Asia by cultivating their unity of faith and confession, developing fellowship and cooperation.

LWF and Lutheran Churches in Asia should together provide a force or power to help people in Asia meet their spiritual and physical needs.

Dr. P. Sormin

# A Note on Paper Writers

## 1. Effective Proclamation of the Gospel in Asia

Dr. Andrew Hsiao: President, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong), Member, Commission on Church Cooperation, L.W.F.

## 2. Challenges of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity in Asia

Dr. H. Parkin: Methodist Missionary in South India for many years and Professor, Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar. His doctoral thesis for Serampore University is on Influence of Hinduism on Batak religion and its implications for Christianity.

## 3. Social and Political Challenges to Churches in Asia

Dr. M. Abel: Professor of Political Science and Principal, Madras Christian College, Tambaram, one of the leading Christian Colleges of India.

## 4. Self Reliance or Creative Discipleship

Dr. P. Prabhudas: Professor of Chemistry, Andhra Christian College and Secretary, Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, India.

## 5. Regional (Asia) and Global Partnership for Mission in Asia

Dr. Sutan Hutagalung: Formerly Professor of Christian Ethics, Nommensen University - presently General Secretary, Christian Protestant Church in Indoensia

## 6. Lutheranism in the Context of Ecumenism in Asia

Dr. P. Sormin: Dean, Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

## 7. Devotions and Bible Studies

Rev. Gnanabaranam Johnson: Doctoral candidate Uppsala University, Seminary Professor, India, author of many devotional books in Swedish and German.

# A Note on Groups

<u>Lecture/Speaker</u>	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
I. Effective Proclamation of the Gospel in Asia Dr. Andrew Hsiao	Rev. Dorairaj Peter	Prof. P. Hu
II. Challenges of Ancient Faiths and Modern Technology to Christianity in Asia Dr. H. Parkin	Rev. M.A. Simandjuntak	Mrs. J.D. Chari
III. Social and Political Challenges to the Churches in Asia Dr. M. Abel	Rev. S. Cheung King Man	Mr. R.T. Blacklock
IV. Self Reliance or Creative Discipleship Dr. P. Prabhudas	Dr. Y. Ishida	Rev. Maynard Dorow
V. Regional (Asia) and Global Partnership for Mission in Asia Dr. S.M. Hutagalung	Dr. Andrew Chiu	Dr. Hoy San Loke
VI. Lutheranism in the Context of Ecumenism in Asia Dr. P. Sormin	Dr. L. Grope	Dr. Daniel Martense
VII. Asia and L.W.F.	Dr. Edward Thomas	Dr. P.L.R. Pospos

# Self Reliance for Mission

## I. INTRODUCTION

### a. Theological Preamble

Self-reliance is not a category which belongs to the normal biblical and theological description of human nature. It is an attitude or trait which arises in the context of human socio-economic or political dependence on alien power or authority, and refers to mental attitudes or social programmes calculated to liberate human beings and social groups from domination by others, whether politically, economically, culturally or otherwise. Despite its secular origin, however, self-reliance stands in the closest possible relationship to biblical anthropology and to the Judeao-Christian understanding of "imago dei", while self-reliance for mission depends for its motivation on a context of Christian faith and conduct.

In biblical anthropology, self-reliance receives initially a negative and problematical aspect rooted in the human being's self-assertive and rebellious nature. This is expressed in the rejection of divine authority and the disavowal of responsibility for one's neighbour (Gen. 3 - 4). Human self-reliance produces alienation between persons and human groups and leads to the dissolution of the People of God (Gen. 11: 1 - 9). The prophets denounce the human tendency toward "hybris" as a form of disobedience which frequently expresses itself in idolatry and the service of false gods and values.

Self-reliance is redeemed of its destructive qualities when human beings are incorporated into the divine covenantal relationship and acknowledge the Lordship of Yahweh. Self-reliance can be transformed into a positive instrument for worshipping God, serving one's neighbour, producing justice and realizing the ends of God's Kingdom. Self-denial for the sake of God in Christ becomes the road to self-fulfilment, as Jesus himself taught and demonstrated through his own incarnation, kenosis and cross (Mark 10: 45; Phil. 2: 5 f.). Jesus summed up the whole Law in the "double love" commandment: "Love the Lord your God" and "Love your neighbour as yourself". From this it is evident that a proper regard for one's own interests and capabilities is a prerequisite for Christian participation in the life of the redeemed community.

In the ultimate, Christian eschatological understanding of selfhood, the natural self and volition are transcended and replaced in a mystic union with God (Gal. 2: 20; Mark 8: 34 and parallels). According to more conventional spiritual wisdom, however, human beings are expected to develop and employ their God-given powers and identities for the service of God and their neighbours. God's people are given individual gifts for particular forms of service (I Cor. 12), and these are collectively used by

the Holy Spirit for the building up of the whole Body in unity and for the mutual welfare of all (Eph. 4).

Self-reliance is therefore a fundamental human trait intimately related to the divine endowment in God's human creation, and with the most profound and fateful consequences for both good and evil, depending on how it is used. Self-reliance in the secular sense correlates with the biblical understanding of human freedom and autonomy, and the desire to be free of alien power and lordship. In the positive sense it confirms the mandate given by the Creator to human beings to be vice-regents and stewards of the creation (Gen. 1: 26, 28), referred to by Jesus in the New Testament as "good and faithful stewardship" (Matt. 25: 14; Luke 19: 11 f.). At the same time, the New Testament recognises that self-reliance, when not employed to the glory of God, inevitably produces among its destructive consequences greed, self-abandonment, concupiscence, and the denial of the divine image (Rom. 1: 18 ff.).

Self-reliance for mission can never be completely removed from the temptation to human pride and vain-glory which end in isolation, competition, and attempts by some to dominate others rather than practising interdependence in Christ. Consecrated to the service of God, self-reliance can produce harmonious co-working between autonomous and responsible members of the Body under the headship of Christ, each member contributing according to the measure of God-given talents to the enrichment of the whole. Like every other divine gift, self-reliance can never be considered an ultimate human achievement but must be sought and practised in the spirit of daily repentance and with a prayer for divine renewal through the Holy Spirit.\*

b. Definition of Self-reliance

What does the term self-reliance mean? asks Dietrich Ritschl and raises a number of questions.

Does it signalise an economic programme?

Is it intended to counter-balance or counteract the idea (or economic reality) of international interdependence or is it a catchword for neo-nationalism?

Does self-reliance mean no more international exchange, understanding, interdependence in political as well as ecclesiastical matters?

Does self-reliance imply or pre-suppose self-determination?

Theologically does not self-reliance border on self-redemption?

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\* Theological preamble written by Prof. J. Scherer upon request by the Officers of the CCC at January 1976 Meeting.

Or does self-reliance merely mean "authenticity" or human freedom or economic/political liberation.

These are all relevant questions and useful in understanding the term. However, a precise definition cannot be worked out but perhaps a particular interpretation in a particular context can be attempted.

c. The Context

For us, the context today is the great debate on moratorium. This debate brings to focus the frustrations in a dependent status - be it in the realm of international economics or international ecclesiastics.

While exposing the power of the rich over the poor this debate also challenges both the poor and the rich for new relationships.

These problems and challenges are characteristic of the present international and economic situation as a whole. While the former structures of the Empire and colony have crumbled down, the economic power of the rich still sustains the neo-colonial and neo-imperial stance of the rich countries in relation to the poor countries, thus perpetuating the poverty of many millions and the affluence of a few.

In many cases what obtains in international, political and economic relations holds good today, as in the past, in international church relations as well. The common factor in international politics and ecclesiastics in this stance is the economic power. But the hope for both these realms to subject the power of economic reality to righteousness and justice is the church's stated belief in the power of the Cross - not in the power of money, and its commission to proclaim this power of the Gospel.

Indeed there are some churches and many individuals, both in the rich and the poor countries, who are demonstrating by their examples that economic power is not the reality; but Jesus Christ, the Cross, and the Resurrection are the reality for the true life of all the people in the world - present and future.

The debate therefore reflects clearly and forcefully the agony of the churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America (AALA) in their struggle to emerge with a personality of their own, to worship Jesus Christ and proclaim His Lordship of the world in their own tongues, with their own soul, and indeed to serve and do obeissance to Him with their own "gold, myrh and frankincense".

The debate exposes further that the churches in these countries are in a new Babylonian captivity and yearn for freedom echoing the divine-backed

outburst of Moses "Let my people go!". For, their praise and the words of their mouths, their deeds and the spirit behind them are not their own. The tasks they ignore, the indifference and strangeness to their environment that they had developed is again not too often native to their own soul.

The churches in these countries would seek relevance to their milieu, to relearn their own forgotten language, rehabilitate themselves into their own habitat and rediscover their own soul.

This freedom they seek not only for themselves but also for their sister churches in Europe and America which are also entangled in similar bondage.

From the countries around Sahara in the North to the Zululand in the south of Africa, from Jordan to Japan in Asia, from Mexico to the southern-most tip of Latin America, this song of freedom rises in unison, although in some places the melody is soft and sad, and in others angry and loud.

The entire land of these continents is an expanded Garden of Gethsemane and the agony is reflected almost in the same words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew ch. 26 (N.E.B.)

"My heart is ready to break with grief" (over the existing situation)

"My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass by me" (call to moratorium)

"Yet not as I will but as thou wilt" (other approaches such as 'Together in Mission')

"Stay awake and Pray that you may be spared the Test" (call to churches: affluent as well as poor)

"The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Truth recognised but unwilling to give up privilege)

#### d. The Historical Ties

In an evaluation of relations between the churches of the west and of the rest of the world, it becomes necessary to affirm that calling for readjustment of these relations does not mean obliteration of the history of the Church wrought by the daring and sacrifice of the pioneers and written in their blood.

\* One writer records: "Few battles in history have exhibited a greater willingness to die than that exhibited by the Christian missionaries in

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\* "Profit for the Lord" William J. Danker pp. 93-94

many parts of Africa. These were the dying words of someone on another field: 'Don't give up Africa'. 'Let a thousand more missionaries die, but don't stop sending!".

The writer continues: "Yet in 1850 when many were wondering whether Africa should be given up, whether the Basel Mission School trainees would still have the courage to go to Africa and to almost certain death, the whole graduating class volunteered." This was when word reached them that an entire team of missionaries was wiped out by yellow jaundice within a matter of weeks.

"My God, the graves! The graves all over Africa!" Adlai Stevenson is reported to have exclaimed after visiting Africa. True, you find these graves all over Asia and Latin America as well. Even today a visitor to these graves, some families lie together in graves, is moved to tears.

While trade and colonialism were no doubt mixed up with the Bible, it may not be said that these pioneers had laid down their lives for trade benefits, colonial expansion and transplantation of European culture and civilisation in these countries. \*

And this glorious history of suffering and sacrifice of these pioneers made in obedience to the great commission "go ye and preach to all the world" - is the common heritage of the Church in the whole world.

This part of history is neither an exclusive part of the European church history nor does it entitle the representatives of the countries of the pioneers to any particular claims or rights over the churches and regions where these sacrifices were made.

The inspiration and obligation to continue their unfinished task belongs to the entire church in the world, and not to any particular race, civilisation or geographical region.

Hence the deep agony and yearning of the churches in AALA countries for the renewal of the body, selfhood, a mature fellowship of equals, recognition of their leadership, integrity in established relationships, for mutual sharing and developing the spiritual, cultural and material resources, for authentic witness in their own lands to their faith and experience in the Gospel where chronic poverty and social and economic exploitation - open and subtle - have mitigated the force and validity of the Gospel and for witness also in the lands of the founding fathers of their churches, where the Gospel is offered as a sacrifice at the

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\* In some countries traders and colonialists who preceded the missionaries also preached the Gospel thus mixing up trade and colonialism with Christianity. In some other countries "Trade followed Bible and often flag followed trade".

Jawaharlal Nehru "Glimpses of World History"

altar of the Golden Calf of affluence and technology and where the first tempter, the Serpent cursed by God according to the Bible, is being rehabilitated by the affluent society - in short for Self Reliance for Mission.

e. Churches in Diaspora Situation in Europe

By dealing with questions of self-reliance one could also think of churches which live in diaspora situations in Europe.

However, due to their different historical development and their present circumstances, they have not been included in this paper. This does not mean that self-reliance efforts in the AALA churches could not be inspiring for them.

Their own efforts or achievements in this field might also be helpful for other churches.

II. PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION AS IT OPERATES TODAY

This question of self-reliance is before us in the context of 'Together in Mission' or 'Partnership in Mission'. The churches in the west and those in AALA have already been in partnership particularly in the post World War Two period and there are some serious questions in relations to this partnership.

a. Partnership between whom?

Obviously it is between churches in the west and those of AALA countries.

Structurally what is this Church?

Is it the congregations, the Church Councils or Mission Societies, Divisions of World Missions or other Departments? It is the Mission Societies or Divisions of World Missions that manage relationships with the AALA churches. But in actual practice it is the staff of these Divisions or Societies that maintain these relations.

Therefore the churches in the west are remotely related to the AALA churches and in reality there exists little fellowship.

The relations and attitudes of the western churches depend virtually on one or two staff members, on their personal education, training, understanding and outlook.

Many congregations, laity and clergy of the western churches are aware of this truncated fellowship.

These staff members operate for a period of time and when they leave, a new person, who has his own individuality that is greatly respected by his colleagues, starts new relations again, calling for adjustment from a related church.

Absence of real partnership has been a source of tension and unpleasantness in these relationships.

There could also be a tendency in AALA churches to staff oriented leadership especially in international relations but AALA churches do not have sufficient funds for specialisation and many staff appointments, and this is a case of weakness being strength.

b. God's money? or "My Money"?

We recognise that all resources - spiritual and material, all good things are gifts of God. Indeed this recognition is part of our liturgy and church prayers.

These resources are raised in the name of Christ and His Church in the whole world. But when the resources are finally in the hands of the western church executive, the process of sharing these resources does not reflect partnership, togetherness, internationalism or ecumenism. That such a position is clearly untenable even from the points of view of common sense or normal human relations, can be explained with the help of an analogy of international trade. The western church fund raising campaign is promoted in the international market of Christian love (congregations, groups and individuals). The goods advertised for sale are "Third World": their hunger, poverty, disease, squalor etc. etc. The AALA churches in trust and partnership have allowed the export of these goods (raw materials with no price!) for sale abroad even at the expense of their credibility in their own nations. But once the funds are raised the western church executive in partnership affirms "It is my money".

c. Who needs Whom?

A church women's conference held in the West recently told the women of the west "The women of Africa, Asia and Latin America need us". Do not the women of the West need women of AALA countries? Is it a case of chauvinism and paternalism or using "Third World" as ammunition in their own battles for leadership?

d. Who gives and who receives?

It is always the churches in AALA countries that recognise and express gratitude for the concern, love and generosity of the western church.

The expression of gratitude of the western churches for what they receive from the AALA churches, their recognition of the fact that their relationship with and involvement in the life of the AALA churches is a source of spiritual and social strength and gives meaning to their church life, is not generally part of the relations.

True partnership consists in the mutuality of recognition and expression of what we receive from others in partnership.

e. The decision-making process

The unilateral decision-making process of the western churches in relation to churches in partnership with them, lack of enthusiasm for internationalisation of missionary effort, attempts to weaken or question whatever international structures do promote equal partnership at the moment, make partnership unreal.

It was Confucius who said that a gentleman makes demands on himself and an inferior man makes demands on others.

The fundamental weakness in the so-called partnership relations is that the AALA churches find themselves in the position of inferior men making demands on others. Unless therefore, these churches seek measures and are helped to move to a stage where they will determine their own priorities and have their resources developed by making demands on themselves, these churches will continue to be in the present unenviable status.

III. THE INESCAPABLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WESTERN CHURCHES

History and the Gospel call the western churches to an inescapable responsibility to facilitate churches in partnership with them to proclaim the Gospel in freedom.

For, the churches are in chains of structures of various kinds, especially institutions and others, unilaterally developed during the mission stage of AALA churches and now bequeathed to these autonomous churches. These burdensome structures are children of a legitimate marriage as they cannot be abandoned to one partner, while the other partner seeks new brides. The western churches cannot shy away from their responsibility to help the churches in freeing themselves from these chains. It is an untenable partnership which apportions assets for one and liabilities for the other!

Moratorium no answer: a Counsel of despair!

But moratorium in the sense, stop sending or receiving expatriate funds and personnel, is no answer. The real answer is the positive dimension

of moratorium namely self-reliance for mission. Therefore let us accept this goal of self-reliance for mission, but with one difference - let us do it together.

But self-reliance is a sine qua non for a true 'Together in Mission'. In other words, self-reliance for mission is "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen" in partnership.

#### IV. SELF RELIANCE

a. Self-reliance is not a new concept. It has been an accepted and openly affirmed aim of the western churches that the mission fields established in the AALA countries would be nurtured to full fledged churches. The famous three S's have been on the agenda of all the missionary organisations of the world. But it is true that each time these concepts came up for discussion, their theological ramifications and missiological implications got more confused than clarified.

Perhaps this paper may spell out briefly some selected basic concerns in relation to self-reliance.

##### b. Poverty and affluence: the stance of the Church

The question of self-reliance of churches in the AALA countries arises because of the poverty prevalent there.

It is clear that poverty in many places is caused by national and international forces at work but beyond the control of the poor people. It is also clear that poverty is the most despicable human situation, and therefore indifference to fundamental causes of poverty and forces that perpetuate poverty is a contradiction of the Gospel. The Church should not compromise in any way with such forces.

The Church in a poor society must therefore face this question and strengthen in their own countries the efforts for the elimination of poverty and the precarious dependence on others.

Poor countries are engaged in valiant efforts to eliminate want and poverty in their own societies. They realise that the success of their efforts lie in restructuring their institutions of production and distribution of income. Some countries succeed in adopting patterns of production and distribution that would ensure social justice - sharing the benefits of progress with all classes of people. In some countries, the pattern of development results in benefits to the urban elite class leaving the vast

sections of the rural population largely unaffected by even large scale investments and who have to be satisfied with fringe benefits. There are cases where total isolation has landed them into an unbreakable vicious circle of poverty.

Thus, while the international economic relations are powerful factors for economic liberation or continued enslavement of poor countries, the poor countries decisions on their goals and patterns of development and their economic institutional structures constitute an equally crucial factor in eliminating their poverty.

Yet, in view of the enormity of the poverty and the interdependent economic relations in the world, rich nations have a powerful hand in aiding or thwarting the poor countries' efforts to improve their economic conditions.

The Church in an affluent society should be sensitive to the fact that their own affluence is the cause and effect of poverty \* of the people whom they want to evangelise. A great part of their affluence legitimately belongs to the same poor people for whose sake charity balls are organised in the west.

A recognition of these facts should help the Church in an affluent society to realise that their love and concern for the poor people and churches in developing countries can be effectively demonstrated by influencing their own national policies and creating a clear consciousness against all kinds of exploitation. By attacking and helping to remove the fundamental causes of poverty in the AALA countries, the dignity, freedom of self-reliance of the churches as well as the societies of the developing countries are better fostered than otherwise.

All the churches in the world, especially those in the affluent societies must engage themselves in the struggle for a new world order. The poor societies are entangled in the dreadful exploitative economic structures of the world. The resources of the world are getting exhausted by reckless production and consumption. The efforts of poor societies for a better deal are thereby thwarted. The western societies must realise their responsibility for this subversion. The Christian Church in the west must raise its clear and strong voice in their own countries against exploiting the poor nations, an exploitation, which if continued unabated would frustrate all attempts of poor countries to secure basic necessities for their hungry, ill clad and shelterless millions.

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\* For a sophisticated and elaborate explanation for the mal-distribution of poverty and affluence read Charles Elliot's "Patterns of Poverty in the Third World", "Inflation and Compromised Church".

c. Is the concept of Self-reliance true and absolute

In the final analysis, a self reliant church is a contradiction in terms as indeed a self-reliant nation. A church is not a self-sufficient unit as its agenda is the world outside itself. It needs to draw strength from the experience, prayers and the resources of other churches and other cultures. In terms of witness and service the Church is inextricably dovetailed to the world outside itself. In the situation the AALA churches are placed at the moment, self-reliance has only relative validity, therefore is not an absolute value.

By the same token, the churches in the west are not self-reliant either. The Church has real life and growth only as it responds to the challenges from outside itself, from far and near. It is in this functional relationship to the world the Church finds meaning and fulfilment. It is therefore safe to postulate that the western churches are dependent on the AALA churches for a meaningful existence.

Therefore all churches must clearly recognise that they are all cast into a mould of a variety of interdependent relationships in the context of the true nature of the Church, theologically and functionally.

V. SELF-RELIANCE FOR WHAT?

While the title of this paper answers this question, the following clarifications are necessary.

- a) A self-reliant church must be in mission reaching out to the world in all its situations and in all parts of the world. This task of the Church however, need not be limited by its own resources. The Church must be free to draw on the international and ecumenical resources including experience to meet its ever increasing challenges.

In all parts of the world, there are millions that are shut out from hearing the Gospel. In some countries, this happens due to lack of human and material resources. In some theocratic states, the laws of the land prevent either preaching or hearing the Gospel. In some secular states, the state ideology claims the loyalty of the citizens, and it is at great personal risk that anyone can opt for the Gospel. In some free countries, the freedom of permissiveness is preferred to the freedom in the Gospel.

Thus, in all countries, especially the new generations are denied access to the Gospel. The basic and unqualified function of the Church is to preach the Gospel to all nations and this is the primary goal of self-reliance.

- b) A self-reliant church must identify and develop its own resources to the maximum.
- c) A self-reliant church must be a giving church: sharing its concern resources, experience with other churches and societies.
- d) A self-reliant church must be able to determine its theology, missiology, methodology and above all its own priorities.
- e) A self-reliant church must be able to defy any pressures or impositions from outside.
- f) A self-reliant church must have enough dynamism to restructure itself in order to be more faithful and responsive to the demands of the Gospel than to tradition. "Self-reliance demands the creation of new goals and new Strategic Paradigm for evangelism so that the true nature of the church is preserved".
- g) Culturally, like a tree, the Church must "draw its nourishment from its own roots and leaves" and indeed from its own soil.
- h) Self-reliance is not only for stabilisation of the resources and structures of the Church, but for equipping itself for a dynamic identification with the continuous process of new creation, and for a prophetic role to call man and society to obedience to God, to righteousness and justice, from time to time.
- i) The Church must find its own identity in relation to the community around it.
- j) Self-reliance for mission is itself a structure relative to time, place and circumstance.

#### VI. FACTORS OF SELF-RELIANCE FOR MISSION

Let us at this stage consider the factors of Self-Reliance for Mission.

The following discussion on factors of self-reliance is intended to identify broadly certain factors that contribute to self-reliance of the churches, particularly in the AALA countries.

Neither the number of factors enumerated nor the explanation of these, is exhaustive. The objective of the discussion on these factors is to start a similar discussion at the national/local level so that decisions might be made in favour of series of actions needed to set the churches on the road to self-reliance.

Necessarily therefore, in a paper presented to a global audience, the explanation of these factors will be brief and in general terms.

Theologians and church leaders will forgive the classification of the factors into non-economic and economic. This will help us to recognise that the theological factor is not self-reliant in isolation of the economic factor.

#### A. Non-economic factors

##### 1. Motivation

Volumes can be written on this fundamental factor of self-reliance drawing from the experience of the history of development of communities in various situations into self-reliant societies. For the purpose of our discussion however, suffice it to quote an African writer: "Self-reliance sought through moratorium is an imperative for the embodiment of the concept of the Church. Each member of Christ's body is called and each is sent".

The realisation of the "sentness" of each member of the Church ought to be the motivating factor for self-reliance. The "sentness" embodies

giving rather than receiving benefits from the Church

serving rather than occupying a position of prestige and authority in the Church and

emptying the 'flesh' rather than preserving and strengthening privilege through the Church.

The realisation of the fact that each member of Christ's body is sent, creates a 'classless' church so that every member has equal concern for witness and service, as against the present situation where the bulk of the membership may not be involved in the active concerns of the Church.

Faith in God that each member is called to the fellowship of the Church and sent into the world would be the strongest motivating factor for self-reliance, the rock on which the self-reliance has to be built.

##### 2. Participation

This brings us directly to the question of participation. The participation of the total membership of the Church in its life, witness and service is theologically valid and economically necessary! Witness and service by proxy (contributing money for witness and service without direct participation) does not represent the true nature of the discipleship.

The operational structures of the various stages in the evolution of the Church in AALA countries have resulted in what may be called active

and passive sections of the Church. The active section are those called to fulltime leadership and thus participate in the leadership of the Church. The passive section, the bulk of the members, are content with their private Christian life and weekly corporate worship. The strength of the Church depends on drawing into active participation this passive section into the Church's life, witness and service.

### 3. Leadership

Enabling participation of all the disciples (the members of the Church) in God's mission through the Church unquestionably calls for dedicated, inspired and informed leadership.

A spontaneous and gifted leadership is more effective than structurally picked up and trained leadership. In other words, the Church must be sensitive to discern God's choice of His disciples. Churches concern in AALA countries cannot be purely managed by experts in modern techniques of "Fund raising, Advertisement, Public Relations and Profit Sharing".

Both types of leadership - spontaneous as well as trained - should be recognised and encouraged by the Church.

Spiritual rather than intellectual leadership commands greater respect and following in AALA countries. The environment and the type of training therefore have an important bearing on church leadership.

An individual known for his spiritual, moral and intellectual integrity constitutes a powerful leadership structure, more than an Assembly, Council or Committee, a factor that must be reckoned with in AALA countries.

International relationship is a double-edged weapon that both builds and destroys church leadership.

An important factor of self-reliance of any church is a leadership committed life long to Jesus Christ and His Church. This includes both the clergy and the laity. Here again the Church must recognise an inspired and committed leadership within the membership of the Church. Quite often the obvious leaders of the Church, both nationally and internationally, do not evince interest in spontaneous leadership and because of this organised churches become a kind of closed community.

Structure of leadership is inter-related to the structures of the life and ministry of the Church. An examination into the tensions and weaknesses caused by this situation is necessary to promote spontaneous life and leadership of the Church.

#### 4. Administrative leadership

In spite of what has been said above, the Church has to operate in a modern society and economy both nationally and internationally, and therefore must have corresponding instruments and structures that operate efficiently.

Many churches in AALA countries are not able to cope with the demands of modern administration, and their apparent disinterest from an international point of view is caused by the absence of technical leadership at different levels of church life and administration.

Trained administrative leadership is therefore one of the important factors for self-reliance in the following areas: office, finance and accountancy, business and property, institutions: social service, industrial and agricultural; project planning and promotion.

For want of these management skills churches are unable to utilise their assets and respond to new opportunities and accept new responsibilities.

#### 5. Structures

Structures of administration and ministry are inter-related.

The present constitutional and institutional structures, transplanted from the west are essentially middle class structures originally operated by missionaries, now by western educated national leaders.

The bulk of the membership cannot handle these structures - especially the conventions, assemblies, church councils and committees. Only experts handle them and thus alienate the mass membership from the life and concerns of the Church.

Culturally, even more economically, these structures cannot be sustained in AALA countries.

The alienation caused by the strange structures of administration and ministries, has resulted in disinterest amongst the general membership of the Church in the programmes of the Church. The leadership naturally turns to the west for support of these structures as well as their programmes.

#### 6. Pattern of Ministries

The pattern of ministries does not reflect local culture and genius. Historically these patterns have fulfilled a role, and the time has

come, especially if the churches have to be self-reliant for mission, to restructure or de-structure their ministries, in such a way that they are viable from a cultural and economic point of view.

Revision of these structures is the most crucial task that the AALA churches face and calls for boldness and courage. The call for moratorium has special significance here. As long as resources and personnel are available from abroad to operate the present structures, however artificial and ineffective they are, it is difficult to make a voluntary decision to pull them down, unless circumstances force such a decision.

The key factor for self-reliance is re-structuring or de-structuring the present western oriented structures of the ministries and services of the Church.

#### 7. Theological Education and Training

The present system of theological education - the seminary that trains priests, particularly - is a built-in stabiliser of the static and out-dated structures of the ministries of the Church.

In order to revitalise the Church for self-reliance, we have observed that the patterns of ministry, church leadership, resource mobilisation, missiology and methodology, the entire gamut of church paraphernalia warrant critical re-examination.

This is not possible unless the theological education system - the content and methods of training, the place of ordination in church ministry are all radically reviewed.

The pivot of all this system is the seminary, which with apparent innocence and holy dignity, is too often buttressing all that we desire must change.

Fortunately, there is awareness of the need for re-examination of the traditional theological system and there have also been many attempts and experiments in this area and these will have to be strengthened further.

Theological education of the people of God - the total membership of the congregation is indeed an effective method of activating and motivating the general membership of the Church for mission - a foundation stone for self-reliance.

A great deal of thinking has been done on this subject and a lot of literature is also available including some experience on restructuring theological education for new types of ministry. The churches must be helped to make use of it.

Theological education in AALA countries, particularly the institutionalised system, is heavily subsidised by the west, even today. Established during the early part of the history of these churches, the AALA churches have inherited many of these seminaries, sometimes even a small church has a seminary of its own. A concerted effort to rationalise and economise the institutional structure that is in evidence today is a welcome sign, but yet the major question of self-reliance of theological education has to be faced more seriously than is being done at the moment.

#### 8. The Socio-political structures of the country and self-reliant churches

The pattern of church ministry and administration is determined by the economic and political system of the country.

The challenge of self-reliance is powerful where a state does not permit private property, obviously a church in such a state cannot exclusively depend on foreign resources, and will have therefore to restructure its pattern of financial support.

In some states, a decentralised Christian church and a spontaneous church life emerge. But this depends upon to what extent Christianity has been part of the culture and civilisation of the total population. If Christianity had been an integral part of the nation's culture such a decentralised and spontaneous church life is bound to be widespread and strong. If Christian community was a minority and the church had been planted from outside, there is a possibility of a decentralised Christian community emerging but may not be as widespread as in the former case.

This also means that the policy of continuing foreign presence as long as military pacts allow it and leaving the church to its own future when the system changes is not a responsible approach. To help all churches to be self-reliant is indeed therefore an investment for a strong and committed church, with a capacity to face hostile forces, should it be necessary.

In such states, traditional ministry and methods also become irrelevant and new patterns of ministry and methodology will have to be found.

Preparation for this eventuality is the right approach especially in countries that face uncertain political futures.

#### B. Economic factors

In discussing the economic factor the important side of church finance is to bear clear witness to the stance of the Gospel, firstly in the

area of direct involvement in economic activities like production, investment, business etc., and secondly avoiding golden handshakes for the sake of income to the Church. A stand against social and economic exploitation should be evident in church economic administration.

Identification through participation in national socio-economic development plans, to the extent voluntary agencies are allowed the opportunity, is again a good strategy for promoting self-reliance.

AALA churches must come out of the habit of thinking that they do not have enough resources. They must be helped therefore to identify and develop their own resources which in their socio-cultural context are abundant.

If churches are given regular exercises in raising resources from within their own countries and churches, coupled of course with a sense of participation, proper motivation and a sense of pride in giving, AALA churches will discover that they have more resources with them than they have ever recognised.

It is in this background the following possibilities are discussed.

#### 1. Economic improvement of members of the Church

The church members in the AALA countries generally constitute the poorer section of the already poor society. Mission/church finance has already done quite a bit to ameliorate their socio-economic conditions. From the point of self-reliance a great deal more has to be done. Providing capital (means to livelihood) including skills is a reliable method of strengthening the local economic base of a self-reliant church.

In-country scholarships, expanded significantly, would be a good weapon in the battle against poverty of the members of these churches. This programme of the D.C.C. is just beginning to gather momentum - both with the donor agencies and the member churches and it has a great role in the future years as well.

Possessing neither land nor capital, technical and even general education is the only means for the members of the poor section of the society to ever become productive. The plea of existence of educated unemployment in poor countries is no basis to deny the poor people their only means of escaping from being a permanent socio-economic liability. Long term plans of development do have bottlenecks of some kind or another especially in countries with large populations. Naive conclusions should not be drawn and precipitate decisions taken by donor agencies on the basis of superficial observations.

The CDS programmes have already been working in the direction of economic emancipation of the poorer sections of the society but a specific mandate to support development plans related to self-reliance of churches would be of considerable help.

The CDS has recently revised its terms of reference which allow more flexible application of its assistance to the needs represented by the churches. (Please see Appendix 1)

## 2. Human resources (manpower) an inexhaustible resource

The best asset of churches in developing countries is their human resources or manpower. The members of the Church, both skilled and unskilled people, are willing to give their time of which they have plenty, to the Church. Indeed they have sufficient enthusiasm for their faith as is evidenced by the overflowing attendances at church services.

People + time + enthusiasm for the faith is money, a more acceptable resource (sacrifice) than money: an abundant resource at that.

The general membership of the Church desire opportunity and direction for service and what the Church's leadership needs is vision and organisation.

A church's ongoing programmes as well as new projects of service and witness should be structured on the basis of this available resource.

Serious research and training in this area would yield rewards beyond our imagination.

This would also result in the meaningful participation of the total membership of the church in its life and witness.

## 3. Properties of the Church

The properties of the Church, buildings, urban and rural lands are large and have to be put to productive use. However, expert advice and management skills are needed.

## 4. Endowments

Endowments could be useful for the continuance of certain semi-permanent social services of the Church. A provision in the terms of endowment for a periodical review in order to build in flexibility, for the Church to be responsive to new demands on its witness is desirable in the case of endowments.

#### 5. Revolving Funds and Ecumenical Development Finance

ECLOF for example, is a good model for churches to use loan funds for worship facilities, social service and development projects for self-reliance. But utilisation of these funds depends on imaginative and efficient leadership.

Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society WCC is yet another bold programme of the churches. Regional programmes of this kind would no doubt enable increased use of such facilities by the churches.

#### 6. National Development and Bank Finance

Churches can be helped to make creative and productive use of bank credit and to take advantage of national development finance.

There are many areas where bank credit can be used with advantage. Churches will have to be credit-worthy to qualify for bank credit.

#### 7. Investments

Organisation of business and investment for profit, on the principles of 'Profit for the Lord' (Danker), with a deep commitment to Christian ethics, is a possible model. (Cooperating missions in Papua New Guinea have also sufficient experience and their report on the working of these enterprises and their future is awaited.)

#### 8. Rural Services

Many churches in the AALA countries are rural based. Several models of rural ministries have to be tried out so that the churches are serving the people in the rural areas. Many projects and ministries of the churches are urban oriented in response perhaps to the western and urban educated leadership of the Church rather than on the basis of the needs of the people. It is possible to launch on meaningful and economically self-reliant programmes of witness and service in the rural areas.

The royal road to dependency is tailoring the ministries of the church according to the knowhow of available experts, and on the contrary the royal road to self-reliance is to make the churches ministries relevant and responsive to the needs of the people whom the churches should serve.

#### 9. Management skills

All the programmes and possibilities suggested also call for sophisticated skills of management.

It might be uneconomic to expect each church in a country or region to have their own highly skilled staff and structures to manage economic ventures separately.

A national and regional level expert bodies to undertake the management of the properties, business, investments, endowment and revolving funds, and bank finance on behalf of the churches would go a long way to help them towards self-reliance.

N.B. Suggested economic activities especially from 3 to 7 above are intended to be a help to the churches to make use of the resources they already have, but not as a main base of economic support of a self-reliant church.

#### 10. International Finance

Western churches in bilateral relations with AALA churches, LWF and other ecumenical agencies should give priority for viable plans of self-reliance over a period of ten years - a decade of self-reliance.

Other donor agencies should be drawn into dialogue and participation in the churches' plans for self-reliance.

Tax money, to which European churches have access could well be channelled to support plans for self-reliance.

Development funds, of European governments that could be channelled through churches and church agencies in Europe could also be utilised for the realisation of plans for self-reliance.

A study must be undertaken to see how the tax money and development funds can be used, if at all they could be used.

#### 11. Time bound plans

All these plans of self-reliance will have to be time bound depending on the needs and potential of a particular church.

### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A three-dimensional approach must be recognised, the first dimension is to stimulate and conscientise churches towards self-reliance and help them with the survey of their potential and identification of their resources. The second dimension is a definite plan of say, five to ten years, by the end of which a particular church could reach a defined 'self-reliant' status. The third dimension is, churches in all the

"three worlds" recognise and be in a position of sharing their spiritual and material resources as a mission task of the Church.

1. Area secretaries to promote discussion of this paper in various churches with financial assistance from LWF for this purpose if necessary.
2. Establish minimum criteria for churches that could be regarded as ready for 'take-off' for self-reliance. These criteria should take into consideration social, cultural and economic conditions of a particular church.
3. Upon request by church conduct survey of churches to ascertain their leadership and economic resource potential.
4. Hold discussions with churches which desire to come under specific plans for self-reliance.
5. Establish cooperation with agencies in bilateral relationship and decide upon a feasible plan for self-reliance for churches desiring such help.
6. Through CDS obtain the assistance of donor agencies specifically for the self-reliance plans of the churches and have a CDS/DCC joint programme of support to the churches for this purpose.
7. Pilot projects for self-reliance to be undertaken by DCC in response to the desire for self-reliance by the member churches. There may be at least one pilot project in a particular region so that the efforts for self-reliance of their church could stimulate both Lutheran and non-Lutheran churches in that region.

A minimum goal could be to have at least one church in a country or region become self-reliant under this programme within five years after the Assembly.

8. To work out concrete political and economic responsibilities of LWF member churches who live in countries which enrich themselves at the cost of poor countries.
9. Self-reliance for Mission should be a major concern in the agenda of the Assembly and possibly be a subject for Seminar and Issue Group at the LWF Assembly at Dar-es-Salaam.
10. Ask Assembly to declare post Assembly decade, a Decade of Self-Reliance, making it mandatory for LWF to promote self-reliance.
11. A desk for implementing self-reliance plans should be established in the DCC, which is a department that is closely related to the life and

work of the member churches.

Inter-departmental coordination can be ensured by appropriate structures to be decided upon by the Executive Committee.

#### VIII. CALL TO THE AALA CHURCHES

While discussing the weaknesses in the existing partnership relations and exhorting the western churches to share the responsibility in enabling AALA churches to become self-reliant, it has to be remembered that the motivation and commitment of AALA churches themselves towards these goals are more important than the support that the western churches might offer. The AALA churches must be prepared for all new situations and challenges that they will have to face in making themselves self-reliant for mission. They must therefore build into these concerns sufficient motivation, leadership and material resources.

It is gratifying to see that some AALA churches have set themselves already on the road to self-reliance. Some of these have met with many obstacles from within the churches. The AALA churches therefore, especially their leaders, will have to demonstrate a greater strength of purpose and faith to realise these objectives.

The path to Self-reliance for Mission is simply not easy, but only in this path lies the fulfilment of the true nature of the Church in the AALA countries.

Dr. Kunchala Rajaratnam



# Lutheran Contribution in Asia in the Ecumenical Context

## Introduction

As we participate in God's mission in today's world, we find ourselves being confronted with insurmountable issues. These issues are vast and diversified in scope and generally critical in nature. The emergence of "radical" theologies exemplified by secular theology through to theology of liberation is only indicative of the contemporary trend of world-wide complexity. The outcry for self-reliance, which even reached the extreme of an advocacy of "mora-torium", is an index of the growing awareness of responsibility in this part of the world, in which there is a struggling with the so-called "corrective theologies" to the conventional establishments.

In a bold summary, those issues which are overwhelming us may be grouped under the headings of identity, relevance, and commitment. The matter of identity has long been acknowledged as necessary for overcoming a so-called identity crisis involving the Church, its clergy and lay members. Because of the sway of radical patterns of thought, such subjects as the divinity, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the atonement of Jesus Christ have been called into question, thus threatening the crux of Christian faith. The task of the Church has tended to become equated with a humanitarian movement, obscuring Christian identity itself.

As a reaction to this identity crisis, the ever-increasing "conservative" and "spiritualistic" movements are rendering to many people an assurance and a clear-cut definition of what Christian faith is all about. The impact of theological fundamentalism recently has not merely been maintained but has been intensified. Then the question of relevance emerges, the relevance to particular contexts or situations. The mechanical application of a capsule deposit of biblical truth has thus seriously raised the question of its relevancy to the given reality. Now the popular term, contextualization of the Gospel message, has this relevancy-issue at stake. While it is easy to polarize the unchanging Gospel and the changing situations in which the Gospel is being proclaimed, the real task before us is the interrelation and interaction between the task and the context in which the task takes place, or between

the Gospel message as the text and the cultural and social setting as the context.

Parallel to the conservative theological current, one overused term in recent years is, therefore, "relevance", overused almost to the point that it has become a theology of relevance. Probably the subject of indigenisation, so familiar to us, can be discussed and included in the theology of relevance. It is certainly significant that we make the Gospel message relevant to the people and the needs of the present day. However, a modern form of synergism is creeping into our thinking here. First of all, we should not overlook the fact that the Gospel itself is the incarnate truth in this world, inherently relevant to the worldly situations, and that our so-called making it relevant may be misleading if not impossible. The concept of relevance, in strict theological terms, is related to the questions we raise and the needs we have, where eventually our questions and our needs take precedence. It is exactly at this point that we should be mindful, not of relevance itself, but of faithfulness and commitment to the Gospel in true discipleship to Jesus Christ. While raising questions is too important to be bypassed in our task, we should not assume, at the same time, that the Gospel as the living and saving message and the real text depends only on the questions we raise and the needs we have.

This is the difficulty with the modern existential approach, an illustration of which is found in Paul Tillich who stated: "The answers implied in the event of revelation are meaningful only in so far as they are in correlation with questions concerning the whole of our existence, with existential questions". (1)

In our attention to the world and to the context, we must also be mindful of the text itself, the content of the biblical message. With equal zeal if not more, we must be concerned about the basic text - the what - of God's event through Jesus Christ, to which only the Bible bears the original and authentic witness; this constitutes the central and fundamental element of Christian faith and of doing theology. Thus, our faithfulness and commitment to the text, the Gospel, must precede contextualization and indigenisation, in which the matter of relevance seems to dominate. In coping with those mounting issues, what emerges in the final analysis is, therefore, commitment in response to the thoroughness of God's mission.

This paper, in applying these findings, attempts to examine the three-dimensional issue in the Lutheran context of Asia, in the hope that discussions on the topic of Lutheran contributions in the Asian context would occur.

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(1) Systematic Theology, I, p. 61.

## I. "Lutheran" Identity within the Christian Community in Asia

We Lutherans, by nature and in principle, cannot view a wider ecumenical community as a "counterpart" to our Lutheran community. Regardless of whether we are institutionally linked with an ecumenical body in the given area or not, we are actually within one ecumenical, catholic church. We only can take a positive stance in striving for a visible manifestation of the Church una sancta. Consequently, we must regard ourselves, even our institutionalised church, as the evangelical, witnessing movement and community, within the One Church of Jesus Christ. In our day-to-day engagement in God's mission, "Christian", not "Lutheran", identity is actually challenged. Thus we find our Lutheran identity in the tension between:

### 1. Denominational Transplantation and Christian Mission

We Lutherans in Asia must acknowledge the fact that we owe our institutional origin to the Christian mission in the form of denominational expansion beginning in the 1840's. (The churches in Indonesia and some in Hong Kong as well as in Sabah, East Malaysia, are an exception to this out-growth of the Western-based denominational church-centric missionary enterprise.) Thus most of our churches have grown as "Lutheran" churches in a close bond with the "sending" (mother) Lutheran churches in the West, spiritually, personally, and financially. Our past has often been oriented in the Lutheran denominational church consolidation, to the extent that we were criticized for being more interested in the overall "Lutheran" solidarity rather than in local participation in and responsibility for common witness and service in carrying out the mission of the Church.

Such is an inevitable consequence of the century-long ruling mission strategy of plantatio ecclesiae, which has been in reality denominational church expansion, following the period of the pietistic and subsequently supra-denominational missions. Following criticism set forth during the 1950's that mission had become the propaganda of every denomination rather than the proclamation of the Gospel (cf. Martin Kochler's distinction between "propaganda" and "mission"), discussions have recently been focused on the problem of denominational "churchification" replacing that of "Christianization" of the previous decades.

The missiological principle behind all these developments, that is, plantatio ecclesiae, is problematic, and in fact is not the proper framework for mission of the Church. This is because of its innate paternalistic expansionism, illustrated by such labelings as

"spiritual colonialism" or "imperialism", etc. The plantatio ecclesiae strategy, which results in denominational transplantation, unavoidably contains a certain paternalism, for it is presupposed by a set of criteria, dogmatic as well as ecclesiastical and structural. Therefore, when we speak of our Lutheran identity, we must do so within the tension between the issues arising from denominational transplantation and Christian mission.

2. Existence as a Particularistic Church and as a Witnessing Community of the Evangelical Message.

The first, aforementioned tension can be rephrased in a different way: that is an existential tension as a particularistic (Lutheran) church and as a witnessing community of the evangelical message. We all agree in acknowledging the fact that the Lutheran Reformation was originally not intended to form a particular church with a specific confessional identity; it rather aimed at the recovery of the evangelical message. It was not in the Lutheran Reformers' mind that they might disengage from the united faith in the one, holy, Apostolic Church and from the united witness and service of the Church Universal; rather they aimed at the renewing of the one Church of Jesus Christ with the preaching of the Gospel and the administering of the sacraments, which were claimed as the sole, universal nota of the Church (cf. CA. Art. VII). "...We have related only matters which we have considered it necessary to aduce and mention in order that it may be made very clear that we have introduced nothing, either in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Holy Scripture or the universal Christian church....". (2)

At the same time, we acknowledge, with a deep sense of regret, the unfortunate developments to the effect that Lutheran orthodoxy not long after replaced such a biblical, apostolic, confessionality with the frozen, stagnated propositional systems and forms of confession. This fossilization was thrown off for a while by Pietism and the Evangelical Awakening, with the result of promoting mission activities (Halle Mission to Tranquebar as well as the Rhenish Mission to North Sumatra and Hong Kong and the Basel Mission to Sabah), but again a reactionary doctrinalism (neo-Lutheranism) changed the whole mission strategy into a denominational propaganda by transplanting "Lutheran" churches.

Certainly, the denominational church expansion boosted mission, featuring the "19th century mission" as a Great Expansion, but its inevitable competitive mission strategy resulted in enormous problems to the point that the establishing of denominational churches came to be the rule in the missionary movement, while the forming a witnessing community of the evangelical message

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(2) Confession of Augsburg, Conclusion, sec. 5.

became subservient. The latter half of the 19th century saw, therefore, the emergence of almost every Western denominational church, including the Lutheran, of course, in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

We cannot reverse the whole picture of these mission developments; we find ourselves in this historical reality. What we can do and what we must do is, however, to recognise the continued necessity of appropriating the transplanted ecclesiastical form within the context of a witnessing community in the given area. This leads us to the next point:

### 3. Confessionalism and Confessionality.

We Lutherans should not consider ourselves as a custodian for the Lutheran heritage but rather as the evangelical witness thrust by that Lutheran heritage. Lutheran heritage should denote that confessing is vital and must clearly be distinguished from mere confessional positions or attitudes and particularly from confessionalism, in which the particular confessions are to be viewed as confessio scripta, separating them from the Scripture and thus from the act of confessing in the contemporary situation. Confessing is an act (confessio in actu) by which the Church awakens to assert its own identity with its missionary perspective, indigenous dimension, and christonomous self-understanding. Thus, the Church is called to a realistic, dynamic, existential act of confessing, which has been termed "confessionality".

Lutheran churches are challenged to maintain this confessionality, which has in the past tended to be coagulated into confessionalism. The fact is that the outward, missionary perspective in confessionality has always been primary, as demonstrated in the ecumenical creeds and the Reformation confessions. We certainly are privileged to share our common heritage of Lutheran confession which, instead of rigidly binding us as a "doctrinal law" - it in fact results in the very opposite to a truly confessing church - drives us across the great distance which separates rigid or absolutic confessionalism from dynamic confessionality by coping with the necessary challenges of society and of the world, as the Lutheran confessions originally intended. Thus, the very Lutheran Confessions make any confessional absolutism unconfessional.

Because of confessional fervour and doctrinal faithfulness, the Gospel message often becomes identified with certain documented propositions, articles of faith and rigid thought patterns whereas their original intent was to free people for a personal encounter with the "event" of God's saving act. Confessionality in our common heritage should occasion us in each place to confess dynamically and proclaim powerfully the good news of God's liberation of humans through Jesus Christ.

## II. "Lutheran" Relevance for Christian Witness

Lutheran confessionality has in itself the action of making Christian witness relevant to given situations. The Lutheran churches in the Asian context should be in a better position to be responsible in asserting themselves on dynamic confessionality, being aloof from long accumulated prejudices, disinterest in sheer theological debates, and possessing an unrestrained eagerness to advance the proclamation of the Gospel.

### 1. Through the "Law and Gospel" Interaction

While the law and Gospel issue may be considered outmoded by some, we Lutherans in Asia are repeatedly reminded of the useful insight from the distinction as well as the interaction between the law and the Gospel as a methodological device for Christian engagement in witness, relevant to our given situations. It was George Forell in 1964 at the Asia Lutheran Conference in Ranchi, India, who said that a contribution which the Lutheran confessions can make to the Church of God in our time would be "to remind us of the centrality of the distinction between law and Gospel for the Christian Faith". (3) The implications from this law and Gospel distinction and interaction have far more real and relevant significance to us in the midst of the social, political, and religious complexity of Asia.

First of all, the law and Gospel distinction and interaction provide us with a realistic insight into the actuality in which we engage ourselves in mission, so real that there can hardly be room left for such a misconceived polarization between the sacred and the secular, inside and outside the Church, the internal, individualized salvation of souls and the outreaching, communal processes of humanization. If mission means for us participation in God's sending forth for the whole of the world and men and women, we then cannot claim that the realm for our mission activity is only spiritual, leaving the physical and secular realm out; we simply cannot compartmentalize our work within the spiritual realm. Often we find the distinction between the spiritual and the physical artificial. God confronts us not only through the Gospel but through the order of creation or through the realm of the law. In the sphere of the law or the framework or the whole of history in which this world moves and operates, we find we can honestly share many things with everyone, all people of other faiths or even of non-religious conviction, for the purpose of maintaining peace, justice, and welfare. And coexistence and cooperation in our sharing human solidarity maintain the minimal welfare of humankind in this world.

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(3) Ranchi: A Record of the Asia Lutheran Conference 1964, p. 31 f.

To describe this in another way, we can state that all people everywhere and at all times, across geographical, ethnic and religious boundaries, are commonly under the law, and on this universal foundation of the law, Christians recognise a basis of contacting, sharing, and even cooperating with all those who join in respect for the law. Under the law there is no categorical distinction to be made between the spiritual and the physical, the Christian and the non-Christian; thus the communication of God's events through the law is of a universal, immediate, and social nature. This helps us in overcoming such a false alternative as "proclamation or development". In fact, Jesus proclaimed: "You are healed and your sins are forgiven". We must not, on the one hand, just spiritualize the healing of the sick, which is actually a physical healing and not just a spiritual remedy, nor must we materialize the forgiveness of sins, which is related to the in-depth liberation of human existence and not just a matter of getting rid of some problems.

Secondly, it is the biblical description that God's message is being communicated through law and Gospel, both of which can best be explicated as "happening". In speaking of law, we normally refer to the law or the regulations, specifically to Moses' Ten Commandments, which certainly manifest what we mean by law. However, the law must be defined as the "principle and operation of order in the world". That is the framework in which the world operates or even the world reality. Therefore, when we speak of the law as God's message, we are dealing with the operation of order in the world which God has created; this is exactly the way the Scriptures describe the law. It is significant to note that the Ten Commandments were given in the midst of the event of Israel's Exodus and that other laws were constituted through the covenant events between God and the Israelites. At any rate, the issue which is at stake in the law is not what is written but what is carried. The law is a channel through which God acts.

Likewise, the other channel, the Gospel, is also an event, rather than a set of good teaching and statements. It is remarkable to observe the recent prevailing move toward reconfirming the Gospel as God's saving action; so the Gospel as such can hardly be communicated and be accepted in a propositional form. Truth is not a set of facts, but truth with the saving dynamic is God living and becoming incarnated in Jesus Christ who is made present through the Holy Spirit. The message can certainly be articulated and formulated into a set of propositions; but propositions themselves, however neat and persuasive, just do not save people. In that sense, we simply cannot depend on a "timeless deposit of doctrine".

Thirdly, God's message through law and Gospel, though the law and the Gospel differ in their functions, is not distilled from a scenario in philosophy, but has an even character. Such a message of God through law and Gospel cannot be transmitted mechanically, like transmitting something from one machine to another; the message must be communicated. Communication derives its original meaning from its Latin form, communico, which denotes "to impart", "to take counsel with", "unite", to share something with one", "to become mutual", or "to have something in common". Thus, communication is an act of "sharing". We can only communicate the message to others as "sharers" and not as "givers". It was against this background that such terms as "witness", "presence", or even "dialogue" could be conceivable along with the seemingly opposite term, "proclamation".

Fourthly, we immediately notice, however, that our sharing of God's events through the law differs from that through the Gospel, for the law and the Gospel differ in their functions, in spite of the fact that both of them originate in God and manifest the action of the same God. The communicating of God's events through the law is of a universal, immediate, and social nature, as we stated before, but in this common sharing experience, while we are striving for the maintenance of peace, justice, and welfare, simultaneously find that we have a mutual experience in sharing our questions and not in sharing the answer; God's event which is being communicated through the law is a guiding event, so to speak, and not a salvatory event. Being confronted by God's guiding events in which we share our questions, we are led to ask whether the solution or the answer stands. In the midst of our communicating God's message through the law, we are eventually compelled to raise the ultimate question as to where we find the answer. And this interaction is the crucial time when we are confronted with the answering event of God, who has sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to us for reconciliation and sanctification; then, the communication of God's event through the Gospel happens. This has traditionally been called "evangelism".

At this point, it has become clear that communicating God's event through the Gospel is not possible universally, immediately, and socially, such as the case of the communicating through the law. The Gospel, because of its nature, must be mediated through the life reality of Christians who can personally bear witness to the salvatory event of that Gospel. It is in the reality of "forgiven sinners" that Christians participate in communicating the Gospel to others.

It is from this living reality under law and Gospel that we can

proceed to state that as a part of those who struggle for humanitarian causes and social betterment, we rejoice to acknowledge the signs of God's activity in the people's unrelenting efforts and even to accept the concrete marks of the divine providence in those human rights movements around the world. Because of our joining and sharing such a humanitarian movement, we must move on to testify to the fact that Jesus stands in the midst of this struggle and developments as the redeemer, through whom we are liberated from sin and thus reconciled to God and to our neighbours. This redemptive dimension makes the community of Christian believers resolutely distinctive from all other "humanitarian" communities and their realities, not because of prestigious exclusivism on the part of Christians but because of our own recognition of human reluctance to accept the lordship of Christ. This itself demonstrates that salvation happens exactly at the point of the interaction between the law and the Gospel.

## 2. Rejecting Modern Docetism.

What we Lutherans must discern is the realistic and concrete action of God's mission by rejecting modern docetism which has emerged in sentimental universalism, failure in discovering neighbours, and in speculative theological debates.

The universal dimension of Christianity seems never to have been put to serious question. In general, a universalism has either been taken for granted or has ended up in a mood of sheer romanticism. To be sure, those who claim the universality of Christianity may well justify their view as biblical. But speaking from biblical foundations also, we see a notion of particularism in the Scripture, beginning with the election of the Israelites, which narrows down to the idea of "remnant". The great question before us is, therefore, that of "universal and particular interaction" in the Scripture, which may in turn be of service in overcoming what I call "romantic universalism". What then does this mean for our doing theology today? We cannot conceive of Christianity and the Christian faith simply in a universal framework while bypassing our local, particular reality. The universal dimension of Christian faith is only conceivable in its interaction with the particularity of our own reality, here and now.

In this "universal-particular" dynamics are we kept from falling into a pitfall of a modern docetism; are we sensitized to the biblical question of "where is your brother?" or "who is neighbour to this person?". To take this question seriously and to discover tangibly who my brother and sister are is "one further step" yet to take place in our doing theology. This one further step is, I

believe, vital, because, when we think of doing theology, we are so often dealing with the conceptions - the lofty, the noble. But such a comprehension of theology lacks an essential; it is abstract, though it may deepen academic interests. Such abstraction, in which we escape into ideals, is wanting in the thrust for action and ends up only with a naive conceptualization. Such conceptualization is only tolerable when it is honest; it is, however, increasingly difficult to preserve today. We must begin examining the usage of our theological terms and the framework for our doing theologies, with the question in mind as to whether they are not being used in the absence of our neighbours to whom we are to communicate the Gospel message and with whom we are to share Christian faith.

### 3. Via Traditioning Dynamics.

Any attempt at doing theology is obsolete without the dynamics of tradition or, to be specific, "traditioning". Serious theologians in Asia are fully aware of this, and in fact they are, in taking advantage of their position of independence from long inherited ecclesiastical prejudices, disinterested in mere denominational survival, attempting to set tradition free from its exclusive orientation toward a past deposit of faith (paratheke), and to involve it in the dynamic process of God's oikonomia (plan of salvation), namely, to demonstrate that the history of the Christ-event calls for "traditioning". It was a Japanese theologian, Yoshitaka Kumano, who ventured to present these dynamics of traditioning over 20 years ago.

Church tradition in Kumano's work is a dualistic notion. Convenient for his purpose, the Japanese language has two words for tradition; one is dento which pertains to tradition in its historical pastness, and the other is densho, which is tradition as a living witness, creating the conditions for the future. Tradition as witness becomes conserved in tradition as past history, and that tradition is faith in one legitimate and significant mode of its being; tradition as past history always retains the formative power of witness. Tradition as witness in turn expresses itself as the historical church that becomes past. It rather gives rise to tradition as witness in the contemporary situation that compels decision for the future, forming the Church's life. The infinite freedom of theology and its renovativeness comes from its willingness to be dynamically bound in the service of the Church.

Thus, we are constantly being challenged to converting or appropriating historical tradition into living witness in every age and every given situation, or else tradition will harden into voiceless forms, frozen and stagnated. Considering the duality of

tradition, we have its continuity not in its conservation of the past tradition but in its witness and mission. On the other hand, if tradition were only witness, without past history, we would dwindle off into an irresponsible self-contented community.

With Lutheran confessionality, we should be in the position to make Christian witness relevant to our own situations in Asia.

### III. "Lutheran" Commitment to Christian Mission in Asia

Having spoken about our identity in a three-fold tension and about the matter of relevance, we come to the point that all that really matters is our commitment to the Gospel and to its proclamation in our discipleship to Jesus Christ. Both the possession of our clear identity as Lutheran Christians and the efforts of our making the proclamation of the Gospel relevant to our own situations, give way, in the final analysis, to the continued and deep-felt sense of commitment to Christian mission, which can only constitute the Lutheran contribution to the entire work of the Church Universal.

#### 1. Question of Self-Reliance

The Christian commitment emerges from our responsive awareness of the complete reliance on and the discipleship to Jesus Christ, in whom we live and work. It is the moment of living in this commitment when we find our lives in such a way that: "the life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me; and my present bodily life is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and sacrificed himself for me". (Gal. 2: 20 NEB)

Following the much-debated advocacy of "moratorium", self-reliance has been enjoying an unchallenged ascendancy, self-reliance in mission as a whole, not to speak of financial independence. However, self-reliance is, as well formulated in the theological preamble to the paper which was produced by the Inter-departmental Task Force on Self-Reliance for Mission (CCC Agenda 1976, Exhibit B4, pp. 1-2), a self-contradictory concept in strict theological terms. It initially projects a negative aspect and only as redeemed, can it be transformed into a positive instrument through which God's mission is to be carried out. More attention should be given, therefore, to the very self; the self must be distinctly defined in the framework of "Christonomous" and not of "autonomous".

In the past the selfhood of the Church has been considered mainly in terms of the Venn-Anderson "three-self" formula: self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing. The order of these self-dimensions may be altered, but the undergirding self only denotes the autonomous self-understanding of the Church. It is recalled

then that the LWF Assembly at Hannover (1952) made a theological contribution within the framework of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession by stating that the true selfhood of the Church "should rather be described as 'Christonomous'", for none is autonomous in an absolute sense and especially in applying it to the nature and work of the Church.

Secondly, the self, in the case of the Christian community, always stands, by nature, to be renewed in mission. While it is mentioned that self-reliance, like every other divine gift, "must be sought and practiced in the spirit of daily repentance and with a prayer for divine renewal through the Holy Spirit", (4) the self appears in reality to be looked upon as something to be consolidated rather than to be renewed. The Church in mission is the "Church on the move" (*ecclesia viatorum*). The self-reliance for mission must, then, be realistically and practically qualified. If we qualify that the self is not to be relied on but to rely on something else, that is Jesus Christ, and as such not to be consolidated for itself but to be renewed for mission, we than propose inter-church participation in mission rather than self-reliance for mission.

Inter-church participation is to be founded on the framework of "sharing", which emphasizes local responsibility in a global dimension. Inter-church participation, being distinct from the traditional one-way flow of theological thoughts and tradition, is the symbolic act essential to the Church in its global task. Inter-church participation does stress, while endorsing the widely declared "interdependence", the church participation in God's mission in sharing all available resources of every church and thus avoids the matter of power balance among the churches which may still occur in the course of their being inter-dependent.

Inter-church participation, in following up the insights provided through what has been talked of as "internationalization of mission", does not deprive, but rather activates, on a global level, the grass-roots spontaneity of the respective local congregations in the participating zeal. And finally, inter-church participation takes place insofar as the churches involved remain in their distinct "Christonomous" identity with the deeply seated commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel in their respective localities.

## 2. The Need for Numerical Growth.

We Lutherans in Asia are a minority group and as such we have a thrust of the "creative minority" but also an inferior and introverted complex concerning our minority size. We recognise, however, that there is increasingly a definite need for numerical

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(4) see paper on "Self Reliance for Mission", page 148 of this report.

growth of the congregations, not only for pragmatic reasons but for theological and missiological reasons as well.

We cannot be so simplistic as to follow the lines of the Church Growth Institute by qualifying numerical growth only as the ultimately valid criterion of church growth. Nor should we, on the other hand, accept non-growth either by rationalising it in false theological terms or by developing a self pity type apathy. There is a theological unbalance if we only talk of the renewal of the Church in terms of "quality". Renewal is of a qualitative as well as of a quantitative nature. We must avoid such false alternatives as "quality or quantity". And as the Bangkok Conference stated, numerical growth without renewal is false, but the renewal in its fullest sense inevitably results in numerical growth. (5)

We are reminded here of Luther's understanding of the Church by referring to Isaiah 55: 11.

For God's Word "shall not return empty", but must have at least a fourth or fraction of the field. And even if there were no other sign than this alone, it would still suffice to prove that a Christian, holy people must exist there, for God's Word cannot be without God's people, and conversely, God's people cannot be without God's Word....." (6)

To consider church growth in numerical terms has been known as "prosthetics" in missiology. The term originates in prostithenai, signifying the adding of people to the Church of Christ, and the unpopularity of this prosthetics has seemed to attribute the "adding" to human capability, thus justifying mission as a great human venture and undertaking. However, as this term, prostithenai, is used in Acts 2 and 11, God is the subject that adds; that is, the growing picture of God's mission. "And there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls". (2: 41) "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved". (2: 47) "Much people was added unto the Lord". (11: 24)

It is evidently significant to note that the "adding" is exclusively an operation of "God's arithmetic". (Hans Ruedi Weber) Then, it means on our part the total commitment to this God in mission who adds the people. The missionary task for us is certainly "to grow in grace" rather than "to grow in number", and to be concerned with "sacrifice" rather than with "statistics". This does not excuse us, however, in our ignoring the growth of the "Kingdom of

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(5) cf. The Salvation Today, Section 3, II, a.

(6) "On the Councils and the Church," Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 41, p. 150.

God" expanding like the mustard-seed "which grows bigger than any garden plant and becomes a tree, big enough for the birds to come and roost among its branches" (Matt. 13: 31-32 NEB)

### 3. Pneumatological Initiative

"The First and the Third World" categorization must now give way to Christians' responsible initiative in mission engagement under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The term, designating countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as the "Third World", has been widely used for some years now. The very phrase "The Third World" has a political connotation as a distinction from the First World, presumably the North Atlantic community and also in distinction from the Second World, generally considered as the USSR and the Eastern European socialist states. And the rest of the world, recently with the exception of my country, Japan, was then categorized together as the Third World, made up largely of "non-White" peoples who have been under the influence and domination of the North Atlantic ever since the discovery journeys of Christopher Columbus and of Vasco da Gama, both towards the end of the 15th century.

The "Third World" has certainly common characteristics: over-population, poverty, and illiteracy. Economically, it is the world which is increasingly outpaced by the First and the Second Worlds. As far as the history of Christianity goes, the Third World has been the sphere of the giant missionary expansion, particularly of the 19th century.

While I see some positive significance of such a "Third World" designation in bringing out the current dynamics of various worldwide movements including that of Christianity, I am personally reluctant to use this terminology. In fact, the Lutheran World Federation officially declared the abandonment of the term from its public statements and official documentation. The purpose of my bringing out this issue here is only to point out some theologically debatable aspects in the usage of the term "Third World", which is the question of categorization, a challenge from those parts of our world to our doing theology.

In a generalization, the movement of Christianity and subsequently its theological undertakings have taken place, for the most part, in the framework of "categorization"; categorizing the person and the people, the region and the country, and the world, even our own church, usually into a dichotomy of Christian and non-Christian, haves and have-nots, givers and takers, or sending and receiving, orthodox and heresy, and making easy categorical statements. Their dynamics have normally been drawn out of the disparity

emerging from this dichotomy. Such a working frame of reference, though occasionally criticized as, e.g. a "theology of glory", has prevailed to the extent of becoming a triumphal conquering theology, or to use Koyama's term, "a crusade theology" instead of "theology of the cross".

Another aspect of this question of "categorization" concerns what I call "supra-favouritism" of the First World toward the "Third World". We live in an age when the voices of the "Third World" draw immediate attention and their actions acquire favourable reaction from the First World, to the degree that it appears to be a compensation for the past century-long predominance of the West.

It is not too early for the people of the "Third World", however, to note that it is becoming an ecumenical jargon to claim that whatever comes out of the Third World has a priority, and also to be sensitive to the possible role reversal in which their voices are now replacing the former colonial ones. Such a supra-favouritism is not only in the ecumenical scene but also in our theological undertakings. This type of favouritism is as much mistaken as colonialism, in that both again place us in the duality of the "categorization" and thus both separate us from our assuming a serious, responsible, self-awareness in theological tasks, by losing the Christian integrity in their alertness, perception, and maturity in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which are essential marks of any theological attempts.

By this pneumatological initiative, rather than taking advantage of such a categorization, we Lutherans in Asia are not always to be the concern of others but rather to be concerned for others.

#### Summary

What contributions can be make as the Lutherans in Asia?

The very idea of "contribution" leads me to contemplate on two sections of the New Testament. One is the episode which we read in Acts 3: 1-10.

Once, when Peter and John were going to the Temple for the prayers at the ninth hour, it happened that there was a man being carried past. He was a cripple from birth; and they used to put him down every day near the Temple entrance called the Beautiful Gate so that he could beg from the people going in. When this man saw Peter and John on their way into the Temple he begged from them. Both Peter and John looked straight at him and said, "Look at us". He turned to them expectantly, hoping to get something from them, but Peter said, "I

have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!" Peter then took him by the hand and helped him to stand up. Instantly his feet and ankles became firm, he jumped up, stood, and began to walk, and he went with them into the Temple, praising God, and they recognized him as the man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They were all astonished and unable to explain what had happened to him. (7)

The other is the firm determination of St. Paul, who declared:

I would say more: I count everything sheer loss, because all is far outweighed by the gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I did in fact lose everything. I count it so much garbage, for the sake of gaining Christ and finding myself incorporate in Him, with no righteousness of my own, no legal rectitude, but the righteousness which comes from faith in Christ, to experience the power of his resurrection, and to share his sufferings, in growing conformity with his death, if only I may finally arrive at the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3: 8-11, NEB)

Dr. Yoshiro Ishida

# Together in Mission

## Section A: "A New Beginning in Partnership"

1. The presupposition for any genuine new advance in missionary obedience and in partnership among our churches is renewal in the Spirit. At Pentecost the first Christian congregation was deeply and spontaneously moved to bold witness to the saving power of the risen Christ by the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2-4). New converts from many regions who scarcely knew each other were molded into a deep unity of mind and spirit, of common worship and praise, and even common ownership of goods and common contributions to the fund for the needy (Acts 2: 44 f.; 32 f.). Similarly, the mission of Peter at Caesarea (Acts 10) and the setting apart of Paul at Antioch for the special work to which God had called him (Acts 13) were accompanied by a deep movement of the Spirit. The history of missionary advance and of the movement for Christian unity shows no lasting examples of forward advance that were not prompted by the initiative of the Spirit and which did not manifest themselves in a renewal of faith in God's promises.
2. This plea for a fundamental spiritual renewal is not the customary gesture to things of the Spirit that normally precedes a church business meeting, only to be set aside for weightier matters. It is rather a recognition that Jesus Christ is the source of our life, "our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption," and the only ground of our boasting (First Cor. 1:30). "To those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). A renewal of divine power and wisdom in the Spirit for the tasks of mission and unity in Christ is our most urgent need. To be disposable as God's instruments for mutual upbuilding and outreach, we must be thoroughly renewed in our working habits and mentality, our deeply rooted prejudices and suspicions, as well as our zealously guarded interests and possessive attitudes. Yet such a renewal cannot be programmed. It cannot be scheduled like a conference, or voted on and funded in the manner of a project. Only God can make us new, and he does this when and as he pleases. It is His to give or to withhold. Not even the most powerful cleric or church bureaucrat can command God. Our duty is to seek prayerfully what God offers and promises in Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:7).
3. Like other church organizations and ecumenical structures engaged in rational analysis, coordinated planning, and allocation of resources for church related tasks, the LWF suffer from a "power shortage". A lack of deep and passionate evangelical motivation, and a too perfunctory commitment to the taking up of the cross and sharing our Lord's mission robs our efforts of divine creative power. Church cooperation and mission also tend to become church business operations on a global scale, instead of signs of our Lord's living presence. Our modes of operation begin to approximate the humanistic and secular ways

of international organizations for the improvement of humanity. Our structures, our organizational skills, our money and our continuing mandate from the LWF may give the impression of a momentum that carries us irresistibly from assembly to assembly, whether "the source of our life" is really present or not. But in truth, in the moment that we cease to ask the basic questions - who is our Lord? Why are we here? What is our goal? What is the source of our power? - we are lost. For we cannot justify our existence as churches or as a federation seeking to support one another in obedience to the Lord's missionary imperative apart from God's blessing, approval and renewing power.

4. In calling for a renewal in Spirit I would like to affirm that there is something prior to our meeting agendas, our common strategy and our joint actions as a Commission. The first priority is "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice" and to be "transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12: 1-2) so that we may "prove what the will of God is". As a Commission we are called not to offer the gospel as some commodity of exchange, like brokers or peddlars in God's goods and services (2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2-3) but to live by the gospel in our personal- inter-personal and corporate dealings. "So we believe and so we speak" (2 Cor. 4:13). Our working style and our life together, if these are to serve as witnesses to the transcendent power and divine treasure which graciously fills these earthen vessels, must become transparencies of God's grace (2 Cor. 4:7). "Not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). For the LWF this would seem to mean a much more pastoral style of leadership in which good administration meets the test of a Christ-like ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19). For the brother churches that make up this Commission, it would mean that our relations are regulated by brotherly love, mutual respect and affection, and bearing one another's burdens.
5. In Jesus Christ we are a "new creation" (Col. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:16-17). The old has passed away, and the new has taken its place. As part of God's new creation and entrusted with our Lord's ministry of reconciliation, we no longer "regard anyone from a human point of view". We have been liberated from bondage to the structures of the "old age" with its divisions of rich and poor, North and South, giver and receiver, producer and consumer, dominator and dominated. We know that if the earthly houses or tents (structures) in which we live are destroyed, we have the promise of a better building "not made with hands" which is a foretaste of the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:1 f.). We groan with longing and sigh with anxiety, desiring to have our "nakedness" covered - the nakedness of our disobedience and our clinging to the transitory structures of the "old age". We desire to be "further clothed", and to have our mortality swallowed up by the full disclosure of what is coming. But we are somehow not ready to live and walk in the pure freedom of the children of God - through the Spirit, by faith, in hope - so well fall back on the ways of the old age. We do not stand fast in the freedom with which Christ has set us free (Col. 5:1) but place ourselves once again under the

yoke of slavery to the past. We repeat the error of the "foolish galatians" in our lack of trust in God's promises, our denial of the Spirit, our refusal to live and work toward the new, and our taking refuge in the old.

6. "Justification by faith" once supplied spiritual power for evangelical and church renewal to the churches of the Reformation. Justification by faith has been the particular hallmark of Lutheran teaching and witness. In the name of "Sola Fide", "Sola Gratia", "Solus Christus" Lutheranism has claimed freedom to overthrow human ecclesiastical tradition and authority in the name of the gospel; to proclaim salvation by grace through faith (not your own doing but the gift of God, Eph. 2: 8-9); to restructure church life under the gospel, retaining all that is precious in human culture, experience and tradition; to engage in good works of love which are pleasing to God and servicable to our neighbor, irrespective of human reward or merit; to seek fellowship and solidarity with all persons and churches anywhere who named the name of Christ and are agreed on fundamental teachings of the gospel and the sacraments; to engage in all lawful occupations and to hold and employ secular power for the maintenance of order, justice and the public welfare; and to witness by word and deed to the coming of God's kingdom which in its fullness awaits the final return of Christ and the Last Judgment. The genius of Lutheranism at its best has been this "glorious freedom" to live and act as God's redeemed people in the world, found in many countries and living under different social systems, but deferring to no secular or ecclesiastical power, and giving ultimate obedience only to Christ in accordance with God's word.
7. Have we lost the precious inheritance of the children of God, led by the Spirit, redeemed from fear, crying "abba father" and ready to suffer with Christ? (Ro. 8:12-17) Without question we are under heavy pressure to barter away the "glorious liberty" of our birthright for lesser goods and values. We become victims of alienation. A split develops between our true beliefs and longings for freedom and fellowship in Jesus Christ, and our actual practices which belie those beliefs. Powerful secular forces and attitudes such as racism, economic privilege, personal domination, cultural superiority and self-preservation seep into our thinking and acting. We render the "glorious liberty of the children of God" - given to us by grace through faith in hope under the Spirit - null and void. Justification by faith is correctly preached and taught, but in practice we turn it into a correct doctrinal message. We do not allow ourselves to be liberated by it. We prefer to abstract it from life in the market place and deprive it of its renewing power. For as a law of doctrine, or as an intellectual proposition, it cannot threaten us. Like Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:14) we draw back from the explosive consequences of freedom in Christ for fear of offending the party of circumcision. We reimpose law upon gospel, in violation of our own convictions. We emasculate justifying faith of its power to renew and make alive in Christ. Like the bewitched Galatians, we end up negating the gifts of the Spirit (Gal. 2: 20-21).

8. Our alienation and legalism have assumed forms, past and present, which have become virtually habitual and which we only manage to thinly disguise by pious slogans. We from the West once made our world mission part of a system of Western expansion and colonial dominance. Thereby we made the gospel dependent on economic and political power and influence. We chose other supports for gospel, church and mission than those laid down by Christ (Luke 10). We brought the mission in the cultural forms and trappings of the West, often failing to distinguish between the gospel and its earthen vessels. We did not trust the gospel to create its own proper cultural expressions through the Spirit. We safeguarded our cherished traditions of doctrine, worship, ministry, church life, finance and administration by compelling converts to measure their progress in terms of conformity to our standards. By our attitude we express fear of too much freedom in Christ. We thoughtlessly introduced burdensome administrative structures, costly institutions and patterns of paid ministry with no economic viability in the local context. With few exceptions, we implied that reliance on distant benefactors was more God-pleasing than self-reliance. In all this we created a system of mission expansion and foreign dominance that neatly fitted the pattern of Western dynamism but bore little resemblance to the New Testament. It also failed to take into account the long-term interest of the churches of AALA. As a final stroke, we created a system of ecumenical relationships on a Western organizational pattern as a support system for partnership in mission, and expected AALA churches to adapt themselves to this system. This was little more than a cosmetic face-lifting of the earlier colonial pattern of church mission relationships, for initiative and planning continued to remain with powerful and resourceful Western churches, mission agencies and donor bodies, while young churches were expected to play the role of permanently junior partners with little real influence on the proceedings. Partnership was too often understood as a one-way movement from donors to recipients. Thereby we said that "money alone dominates". Sharing of the gifts of the Spirit given by God to all who are baptized in Christ is of no real consequence in such a practice of partnership.
9. If this indictment dwells heavily on the sins of the West, it is obvious that justice and equity dictate such a course. The victims, even if not wholly innocent, must be accounted more righteous than the perpetrators, even when not fully deserving of blame. Virtue is by no means a monopoly of a particular nation, culture or church; neither is its absence. The point is not to make a precise accounting of the sins of the fathers, or of their successors, but to demonstrate the role which alienation has played - and in some way continues to play - in our partnership relationships. When one or both parties feel aggrieved, partnership is not possible without some kind of reconciliation. A reconciliation between AALA churches and the wealthy and dominant churches and mission bodies of the West will not come about until the former are fully and unconditionally acknowledged as spiritually free and responsible members of the body of Christ within the fellowship of the LWF. As such, they are equipped with every

spiritual gift, and prepared with the same faith to undertake any God given task of mission and ministry in interdependence with the body. This acknowledgment has nothing to do with size, history, background or economic resources; it rests solely on the spiritual selfhood ("christonomy") accorded by God to each group of believers through the covenant of baptism. It depends for its fulfilment not on external calculations but solely on the faithfulness of God who accompanies his gifts and his calling with his blessings. "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ." (Phil. 4:19; cf. 2 Cor. 9:8-10).

10. A model for fellowship, mutual recognition and cooperation between culturally diverse but spiritually equally endowed churches is found in the New Testament. The Hellenistic congregations which grew out of the gentile mission of Paul and the other apostles were linked not by ties of organization but rather common faith and calling. Pastoral visits, exchanges of letters of spiritual counsel, mutual intercessions and the occasional provision of a gift or a loving gesture constituted their ecumenical linkage. A one-time but evidently very important monetary offering from the daughter churches for the relief of famine victims in the mother church (2 Cor. 8:4, 9:1) expressed both fellowship (*koinonia*) in the gospel and service (*diakonia*) to the needy. Between the mother church and some of the daughter churches there were evident theological differences, as shown in Acts 15 and Gal. 2. Yet so deeply concerned was Paul to maintain the spiritual relationship between these churches that he risked his life and freedom by going to Jerusalem (Ro. 15:25-28). A deep sense of mutual belonging pervaded relationships between these scattered and organizationally independent churches. With Christians at Philippi, Paul entered into a partnership of giving and receiving (Phil. 4:15). He requested prayers for his safe deliverance and his ministry of the gospel (Phil. 1:3 f.). He exhorted the Corinthians to "have the same care for one another" whether in suffering or rejoicing (1 Cor. 12: 25). He encouraged the same recalcitrant Corinthians to excel in liberality, assuring them that God would not only meet their needs but deepen their experience of faith and thanksgiving (2 Cor. 9:6-15). Writing to the Romans about his long expected visit, the apostle hoped not only to "impart some spiritual gift to strengthen you" but also to be "mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine" (Ro. 1:11-12). The mark of this relationship was frank and open sharing in mutual respect and affection, not notwithstanding occasional sharp differences and struggles over doctrine or policy. Such differences did not lead to separation or falling out. Nor did the paternal authority of the Father in Christ lead to paternalism or possessiveness toward the churches he founded. Once a church was related to Christ by faith, baptism and the gifts of the Spirit, it acquired an identity that was uniquely its own yet common to all the churches that named the name of Christ. This identity was the basis both of freedom and interdependence.

### Section B: "Responses from the Churches"

#### I Introduction

At our CCC meeting in Adelaide in May 1975 a paper entitled "Together in Mission" was prepared at the request of the CCC Officers and presented to this Commission. It was designed to stimulate preliminary discussion in the CCC and in member churches on questions broadly related to the CCC mandate. It was also hoped that it might shed some light on the role of this Commission and Division after the 6th Assembly of the LWF (Dar-es-Salaam, 1977). The paper was later circulated in slightly revised form to member churches and national committees together with a brief study guide and a request that the churches comment on the issues from their own perspective. The questions put to the churches had to do with

1. The meaning and use of the word "mission";
2. The proclamation of the Gospel and other functions of the Church;
3. Unity and mission;
4. Structures for partnership in mission;
5. Conclusions and suggestions to the LWF-CCC.

It is certainly clear from the responses that the churches have welcomed this opportunity to communicate with CCC and with each other regarding fundamental issues of the church's partnership in mission today, as well as their expectations from LWF-CCC. The initiative was timely. Initial responses indicate a great depth of concern. Taken collectively, they point to the fact that some instrumentality like CCC/DCC has become indispensable to the churches in carrying out their mission in partnership. Yet this affirmation is made by churches out of widely varied contexts and certainly with appreciably different emphases and priorities. The present paper attempts in a very limited way to summarize and to illustrate the broad range of responses received so far (6 from Africa, 1 from Asia, 2 from Latin America, 3 from Eastern Europe, 4 from Western Europe, 2 from the U.S.A. plus several national committees). No pretense of completeness is made, as responses from some member churches are still arriving. A fuller impression can be gained by examining letters and reports from various countries received in the DCC office, some of them compiled by individuals and other drafted by committees. These materials have been taken as the basis for some of the draft recommendations on the CCC mandate being presented to the Commission at this meeting.

#### II Understanding of Mission

Mission is not simply a task or function of the Church but the very reason for its existence. Eloquent testimony is borne to this conviction in a response by a Malagasy pastor. "Mission is the primary task of the Church for a Church which abandons its missionary obligation loses its *raison d'être*. Jesus launched a mission, not a church; his disciples were called in order to be sent out as witnesses to the ends of the earth. The Church is not an end in itself, for it was instituted by Jesus to be

a mission. Are we therefore right, this pastor asks, in speaking of "the mission of the Church" when our Lord in fact intended the Church to be for mission? Have we not inverted the proper order? The experience of the LWF at Evian when the term "mission" was dropped from the name of CCC demonstrates powerful pressures to remove mission from the center of our concern and to substitute other churchly priorities. Therefore each church needs to criticize itself humbly and prayerfully in order to recover its valid missionary mandate. "One must call member churches to a spiritual renewal as a sure and most authentic way to bring them to missionary renewal, which would consist in helping the churches to escape from their immobility" (Madagascar).

From socialist Hungary comes the moving conviction that "one may not abandon the missionary task because this is a creating and constituting function of the Church." The missionary task does not originate in any anxiety to guarantee the Church's future existence but solely out of "hope that the proclamation of the whole Gospel can become helpful for the healing of the whole human being." Having no foreign mission fields, the church in Hungary is convinced of the urgency of "preparing congregations and church members for witnessing to the whole Gospel in their context." Mission is not for conquest but for humble service. It has nothing to do with fine statistical reports. Rather, it grows out of the Church's self-understanding as "a Church for the world." (Hungary) A similar view is expressed by a church in Rumania which seeks to prepare its members and congregations for diaconic service, personal pastoral concern, and a reaching out in love to the lost and neglected elements in the population.

There is a common understanding that mission relates to the whole life and task of the Church in the world. The preempting of the term mission for specialized foreign mission activities in the past, and the particular historical and political associations of the term with Western missions, continue to cause some problems. Yet there appears to be a general desire to revalidate the term mission. The concept of Missio Dei is widely supported. Mission originates in God's sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit into the world and continues through the witness of the Church as the called out community to which the Lord's mandate has been entrusted. The goal of mission is never the Church itself but always the renewal of the whole created world. Therefore mission cannot be actualized in inter-church aid or ecumenical sharing alone. It seeks the permeation of the whole creation with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. From several European countries have come appeals for clearer theological definitions of the foundation and goals of mission. The German National Committee statement, the most comprehensive of those received, can be examined with profit. A Norwegian statement criticizes the LWF for giving missionary obligation too little attention in the life of the LWF. This statement does not agree with the view that "the world sets the agenda" for the Church, nor that mission is merely the common denominator of what various Lutheran churches think. For mission according to this view is a fundamental and inalienable right of Christians which takes its foundation from scripture and the Great Commission. It is therefore not discussable (Norway). From Finland comes the view that the Church develop a clearer understanding of its mission task in the period ahead.

A further observation is that Lutheran churches tend to see their mission as being defined by the context in which the Church operates. Mission has its locus in a variety of concrete life situations, and each local response is shaped by its own milieu or environment. In Southern Africa the thrust of the churches' contemporary mission is clearly determined by the struggle against racism. In Ethiopia, adjustment to the current economic and social revolution shapes the response. In Liberia the movement of population from traditional tribal areas into urban industrial life defines the new frontiers to be crossed. India's context is that of a tiny Christian minority community called to be "salt and leaven" amid the dominant religious communities and the cultural, social, political and economic forces of modern India. A church in Argentina seeks to find its identity in mission but faces considerable perplexity. It witnesses in a young nation, yet one which has no indigenous culture in the sense of Asia or Africa, but is considered an offshoot of Europe or North America ("A son who has difficulty in finding an identity in the shadow of his father"). Dialogue with other churches in the Southern hemisphere could perhaps help this church to find its identity in mission. Hungary presents a clear profile of mission in a post-Christian world. The church witnesses to people who used to be religious or Christian but are not so any more. "To proclaim the Gospel for such people is more difficult than for people who were not aware of Christianity at all." The situation in socialist countries, when one penetrates beneath surface appearances, seems to resemble that in many Western countries.

Comments from the churches indicate growing awareness that while the same mission task is given to all, each church is called to work out its missionary obedience in a unique situation. The sharing of experiences coming out of concrete obedience in each church's situation is viewed as one aspect of partnership in the common task. Future CCC consultations would do well to provide opportunity for churches to share their experiences in mission.

### III Scope of the Gospel

Lutherans do not see the proclamation of the Gospel as an activity that can be divorced from the total witness of Christians to persons in their life situations. Not only the unity of man as body, mind and spirit but also the unity of Jesus Christ as true God and true man demand a witness to the gift of salvation in its comprehensive wholeness. Above all, African member churches are insistant on this point. Jesus in his earthly life, says a Malagasy pastor, was an "active word" incarnate in every context where he met people. The Bible knows no dialectic of proclamation versus human development, or of witness versus service. The problem arises only for the Christian who develops his thought in Platonic dualistic categories. Therefore de-platonizing theology is necessary to safeguard the purity and integrity of proclamation. "Proclamation without deplatonization is disincarnate proclamation." (Madagascar)

In actual practice it is important that proclamation and service go hand in hand. Thus in the work of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan, medical and agricultural outreach programs also seek to witness to Christ, while evangelistic programs produced by the RVOG Hausa studio reflect concern for the whole person.

The Lutheran Church of Nigeria believes that "any effort to make a line of demarcation between so-called evangelization and service is artificial" and quite divorced from the spirit of Christ.

"Proclamation of the Gospel of salvation should aim at the whole man and will inevitably be socio-political in its application". Churches in Nigeria feel it is their duty to support church members who take up political duties; they also feel challenged by constitutional questions and by local and national political issues. The same is true of the Church of Eritrea which speaks of being "the voice of the voiceless" and "standing up for the right." Black or African theology, according to a comment from Southern Africa, has contributed to the rediscovery of the biblical concept of wholeness.

An important policy question is posed by the Lutheran Church of Liberia. This church has historically combined witness and service in a heritage of total ministry as brought by the missionaries. According to the terms of this church's partnership with its supporting mission agency, the Liberian church is currently emphasizing self-support at the congregational and church administrative level. A gradual reduction in subsidies from abroad for educational and medical services poses a threat to the continuation of this "total ministry". To some degree the difference is being made up by increasing government assistance, but there is no guarantee that complementary ministries to the whole person can be continued indefinitely. This church takes the view that in its situation, out of its African understanding of the integral wholeness of life, funds received from government or development agencies must be used "in the name of and to the glory of Jesus Christ", that is, as a form of witness to God's goodness and a summons to respond to that goodness. It refuses to make a cleavage between witness and service.

A related question is raised in several Scandinavian papers. The writers accept the principle of socio-political engagement in mission as an implication of witness to the Gospel. Yet in no sense, those writers say, can such activity become a substitute for proclamation. The Norwegian paper wonders why the issues raised in the LWF Consultation on Proclamation and Human Development (Nairobi 1974) were not conclusively answered. A Finnish comment notes that the Nairobi Consultation arrived at no clear theological conclusions; moreover, the results of that Consultation have not been fully utilized or applied in the work of the LWF. Should the finding of Nairobi 1974 have been developed more fully in terms of their theological implications and practical significance for church policy? There is reason to believe that Nairobi 1974 failed to complete its task, and that further follow-up is necessary.

Member churches strongly support a policy of holistic ministry, yet they see no conflict between that position and the call to evangelize those who have never heard the Gospel or (especially in Eastern Europe and in the West) those for whom the claims of the Gospel have become meaningless. Once again, the African responses are the most emphatic about the evangelistic vocation. Whatever difficulties exist, the obligation to spread the Gospel cannot be neglected (Eritrea). Authentic proclamation points to a divine power which enables man to discover himself as he is and to accept salvation in Jesus Christ. "Proclamation is a monologue which liberates from sin and restores the image of God in which man was created." (Madagascar) For this reason the specific task of witnessing to the Gospel among those

who do not know God's salvation in Jesus Christ can never be eliminated from the broad concept of *Missio Dei*, as the German report wishes to affirm. Mission is indeed the task of the whole Church, and includes all that the Church does, but witness to the Gospel among non-believers lies at the heart and center of that task. The Gospel is the whole Gospel for the whole person, but it is always God's word proclaimed to the whole creation and the directed to the ends of the earth. The Hungarian church also holds the view that in the de-christianized culture of socialism every opportunity to witness to persons who do not know Jesus Christ should be taken.

Yet a poignant question is implicitly raised about the genuineness of Lutheran commitment to evangelism. Do Lutherans lack evangelistic passion? Some African respondents seem to think so. The Malagasy writer suggests that the current interest in dialogue may indicate a loss of faith in the Gospel. "The effort to establish a relation with non-Christian religions is high treason against the Lord. The tendency to compromise dampens missionary vocation and encourages the world to discredit the Church." The only true dialogue, according to this writer, is the gathering of churches in faith and prayer in union with their Lord, to listen to the "monologue of divine grace", (Madagascar). A Nigerian leader states his view that Lutherans tend to abandon church growth and evangelism to conservative evangelicals. "I think it is a question of our forsaking the foundation, the source and heart of evangelism, Jesus Christ himself. We adopt an intellectual attitude to Christianity and forsake to lift up Christ himself. Christ must be preached in his fulness and power, not minding whether it sounds acceptable to modern ears. We must return to a proclamation of not only the wholeness of the Gospel but more so of its power (dynamis of God)." (Nigeria) Comments from mission socio ties strongly support the priority of proclamation and evangelism as the focus of their concern. One of the draft recommendations to be presented to CCC deals with partnership in new missions and evangelistic outreach (recommendation C-VIII).

The challenge to confess Christ issued by the 1975 5th Assembly of the WCC at Nairobi (Section 1, Confessing Christ Today) deserves serious attention by all Christian churches. Posing the question, "what is the meaning of your life, and why do you live as you do?", the report speaks of the duty of "naming the name of Christ" and bearing witness to Christ in varied situations. "What are our hesitations about explicitly confessing our faith before others? A loss of confidence in the God we proclaim and in the power of the Gospel so that we lack confidence in our mission as Christians? By not experiencing deeply enough the joyful healing love of God so that we are unable honestly before those to whom the good news is heard as bad news?" The report issues a call to confess and proclaim with urgency the whole Gospel for the whole person in the whole world through the whole Church. "We do not have the option of keeping the good news to ourselves. The uncommunicated Gospel is a patent contradiction. We are called to preach Christ Crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23, 24). Evangelism, therefore, is rooted in gratitude for God's self-sacrificing love, in obedience to the Risen Lord. Evangelism is like a beggar telling another beggar where they both can find bread." (Section 1, WCC Nairobi Report) For Lutheran churches this ecumenical

challenge can also be heard as a call to spiritual renewal in order to be more fully empowered for witness to the Good News. This emphasis must somehow also be reflected more centrally in the work of CCC.

#### IV Unity and Mission

When it comes to mission in unity, responses from LWF member churches show that a number of different positions are held on the place of confessional identity in the life of the Church. Lutheran loyalty does exist as strong uniting factor. Yet the manner in which the confessions are understood and applied in each local situation remains a subject for further study and consultation between the churches. Several examples illustrate the variety of positions.

The member churches of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India (UELCI), for example, after years of active engagement in wider ecumenical activity and church union negotiations which have produced agreed doctrinal statements, now tend to view the confessions as a rallying point for strengthening Lutheran solidarity and identity. They want to remain within the main stream of Indian ecumenical life but to make their own contribution to Christian witness as a united group of Lutherans. The FELCSA statement from Southern Africa, by contrast, suggests that a too static and defensive interpretation of confessional loyalty can in the present struggle against racism in the church hinder black Lutheran churches from reaching out effectively to their counterparts in other black evangelical churches in Southern Africa, particularly those of English background and tradition. Regrettably, the intense effort to use existing confessional agreement between black Lutherans and German-speaking white Lutherans in Southern Africa as a basis for actual fellowship at the Lord's table has so far fallen short of success. These illustrations show that the actual role of the confessions in the life of the Church is never a matter of doctrinal interpretation, pure and simple, but involves the total context and life situation of the Church.

An example of a more fluid and open approach to Lutheran identity in a situation which lacks clear guidelines or precedents is provided by the Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan. This regional Lutheran church in Nigeria is part of a wider inter-confessional fellowship of evangelical churches, and is deeply involved in contact and cooperation with non-Lutherans. The church supports a joint theological college, participates in the work of the Christian Council of Nigeria, is active in the pan-Protestant "New Life for All" evangelism campaign, and also cooperates in joint urban mission work. There is growing appreciation for Lutheran identity in this church, but up to now Lutheran loyalty has not hindered it from participating in joint activities of proclamation and service "where these could best be done together with other groups." The Lutheran Church of Liberia has a similar tradition of collaborating with other Protestant groups in theological education and programs of service. This church has under consideration a possible future merger with its United Methodist counterpart in Liberia. It wonders what the nature of its continuing relationship with the LWF would be under such circumstances? Would it be hindered in participating in LWF programs and in receiving assistance? The LCL seeks clarification of the LWF attitude toward trans-confessional mergers and

their relation to LWF membership policy.

Lutheran churches also face a broad spectrum of ecumenical issues, relationships and challenges. At the lower level is membership in local or regional Christian councils, which is quite general. At the upper end of the spectrum comes trans-confessional church union negotiations which, in the case of Lutheran churches, have so far nowhere resulted in actual mergers. An up-to-date survey of the precise situation of local churches is sorely needed. In between come various opportunities for joint witness and service which Lutherans, for the most part, desire to support with their participation though in varying degrees. Another role played by Lutherans on occasion is that of mediating between and helping to reconcile positions of other Christian churches, by acting as a kind of bridge between confessions that are not in dialogue. The Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan, for example, has served as a mediator between conservative evangelicals related to the Lausanne Congress tradition and ecumenically related churches. Thereby it has helped to lessen tensions. It is also uniquely equipped to establish links with both Roman-Catholics and with other groups interested in charismatic renewal. This service as an ecumenical bridge deserves further consideration.

Some further comment is in order in connection with the UELCI's attitude toward church union. These Indian Lutheran churches are totally committed to Christian unity but not to church union. They also feel compelled to resist pressures from abroad for trans-confessional church union in order to move towards stronger Lutheran unity. The reasons are that Indian Lutherans do not currently view church union as the real problem, or as the answer to the real problem, which is "to motivate the churches for mission." "Large monolithic structures will not promote real fellowship within a large united body." Questions of polity and finance also play a part. "Concern for mission disappears," producing a tragedy of the highest proportion. Accordingly, the UELCI wishes to make its ecumenical contribution, for the time being, by strengthening Lutheran links. It appears likely that at least some Lutheran churches in Southern India will become members of a united church in South India after 1980. The challenge of church union demands careful consideration in the light of Lutheran theology, attitudes of the churches, and local situations.

Another aspect of unity concerns what Lutheran churches can learn from other traditions, and what they have to contribute in a process of sharing. The Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan evidently feels that it can gain something from the evangelical enthusiasm of other churches. At the same time, it can serve as a bridge for wider contacts between churches out of its own Lutheran understanding of the unity and apostolicity of the Church. Black Lutheran churches in Southern Africa have come to a deeper appreciation of the gifts of other black evangelical churches during the present crisis. Lutheran churches, so the FELCSA report states, could gain something from the strong emphasis on removing racial discrimination found among churches of English tradition. The Anglican use of Eucharistic worship as a preparation for witness, the Methodist stress on lay involvement, and the Congregational concern for local Lutherans could share with others their concern for a true scriptural basis

for unity, and their fresh insights into Lutheran theology that have come vividly alive in the current situation. For example, the Lutheran understanding of the relationship between the Two Kingdoms has assumed an unprecedented importance in connection with the theological struggle against racism in the church. Conversations with other churches in Southern Africa could help Lutherans "rediscover the ecumenical dimension of the Lutheran confession."

In Argentina, the IELU similarly feels that a deeper sense of its Lutheran identity and vocation might come through dialogue with other churches in the Southern hemisphere. This small church has not yet resolved the problem of different kinds of confessional loyalty brought from Europe and from North America. Latin American Lutheran churches can on occasion play an effective mediating role between Roman Catholics and other evangelicals.

Lutheran churches have a particular ecumenical vocation to fulfill in connection with partnership in mission. In earlier years, e.g. in connection with the LWF Minneapolis Assembly (1957) and in several all-Africa and all-Asia Lutheran conferences, the place of the Lutheran confession in the life of the Church and the approach of Lutherans to the unity movements were subjects for careful analysis. Indications are that the same questions need to be taken up again in the context of current challenges. The call to mission is given to churches in partnership. Moreover, unity in Christ is a prerequisite for effective mission (John 17:21 f.). Yet the sound theological principles on unity provided by earlier Lutheran conferences are not being clearly enough echoed today. As the German National Committee report emphasizes, unity is not a common denominator of various doctrinal positions, nor is it something added on to other characteristics of the Church. It is given in and with the Gospel, and it is intrinsic to the nature of the Church. Yet it needs to be properly expressed in terms of outward fellowship. The purpose of the confession is to give a clear testimony to the biblical message which governs our proclamation of the Gospel and our administration of the sacraments. So understood, the confessions serve the mission of the Church by defining its normative evangelical content, and the unity of the Church by clarifying its indispensable foundation.

#### V Structures for Partnership

Certain keywords occur again and again in the responses to the question about structures for partnership - words like trust, respect, equality, friendship and so on. Such words tell us that partnership between churches is always something more than formal structures or prescribed relationships of cooperation. It depends on our oneness in Jesus Christ, which in turn is a gift of divine grace. Trust can bind together Christians in different social systems and across the barriers created by massive economic differences. "We should trust somehow one another to a higher degree. In our opinion every Lutheran church should listen to the other one without any prejudice and should learn from the other." (Hungary) "LWF should continue to promote the sense of equality of partnership." (India) Partnership should take a new form "so that all churches may participate in the sending and receiving process." (Eritrea) Since language may suggest inferiority, churches should simply be referred to as "Christian

churches situated in different parts of the world under different conditions." All churches have something to offer and something to receive. Churches may be needing financial or personnel assistance "but they may as well have spiritual joy and skill that they can share with their fellow churches. The feeling of superiority or inferiority is one of the main obstacles to the work of church cooperation." (Eritrea) "Our mutual relationship could be strengthened by ideas and suggestions going more actively in both directions. It would help if previous and in some cases present fears of domination in mission-church relationships could be eradicated. If we are truly partners there should be a two-way traffic in mutual trust." (Nigeria)

Many statements imply that wrong attitudes toward money are a major hinderance to genuine partnership. Partnership should not always be thought of in terms of financial aid, writes a Commission member from Madagascar. "Christians should also help each other in other ways - through ideas, suggestions, visits, reciprocal encouragement, above all in difficult times when Christians become a minority, whether because of the nominal faith of their fellow countrymen or because of the ideological orientation of their government, visits and the presence of fellow believers are worth much more than money." (Mme Marthe Ralivao Ramiaramanana) A Malagasy pastor, speaking of the moratorium issue, sees it as not simply a material or financial question but also a spiritual one. "Moratorium is above all a question of faith and obedience. The two partners are called to repentance and faith so they can discern the signs of the times and place the future of the Church in the hands of Almighty God. Money is exorcised of its satanic power so that it can become an instrument of friendship and fraternity which God provides to make his Church one in mission." (Madagascar) Thereby the reality of the Church universal can attain its proper theological and practical significance. But this will happen only through a mutual spiritual renewal, in which all churches in humility pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit so that their human efforts and resources are not deified or allowed to become instruments of domination. (Madagascar) No real change is possible as long as giving churches believe the money is "theirs" and want to know what happens to it. (Southern Africa) "Aid is an instrument in the hands of the giver to influence policy." (India) Bloc grants to partner churches are appreciated because they allow for greater freedom and flexibility in planning and budgeting and also stimulate aided churches to increase their giving from local resources.

Several papers make a plea that Lutherans take a more flexible attitude toward structures. They note that structures are, for Lutherans, always provisional rather than absolute, and should be seen as serving the purpose of mission rather than being treated as ends or goals in themselves. "The structure is good if it is suitable as a means to fulfill our mandate in the given social and historical situation. The church structure must pursue a missionary aim". (Hungary) This insight can profitably be applied to LWF structures as well as to church and mission relations. It is asked, for example, whether the LWF insistence on working through national committee channels and by-passing mission societies which carry the traditional burden of mission outreach in Scandinavian

countries is not a mark of structural rigidity. (Norway) This structural approach has the effect of lessening interest in LWF affairs, it is alleged. The breach in contact between mission societies and CCC was never the desire of those societies but had its beginning in the LWF structure. (Norway, Finland) Many reports express appreciation for the continued value and necessity of bilateral structures - partnership relations between two bodies not channelled through Geneva - for promoting greater intimacy and personal involvement. (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, U.S.A.) While valuing multilateral channels for certain purposes, these reports in general take the view that the LWF should respect the wishes of each partner and not show preference for multilateral or Geneva-routed structures.

On the other hand, member churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America are virtually unanimous in their preference for multilateral and CCC-sponsored structures. They find in multilateral structures greater mutual respect and freedom from domination by powerful partners. Churches in Africa feel a dichotomy between partnership in the LWF and bilateral relationships with Western churches, because these represent different approaches to being "together in mission". The tradition of "sending and receiving" lingers on in bilateral ties and makes real partnerships more difficult. (Madagascar) The feeling of superiority or inferiority is a major obstacle in bilateral relations. (Eritrea) LWF relationships (consultations, study groups, all-Africa assemblies) are more challenging to the Lutheran Church in Sudan than bilateral ties. More interchange between churches in the same continent is desired (Nigeria). The Liberian church sees more creative possibility in multilateral relations, for in this framework its own autonomy and identity can flourish (Liberia). "In the LWF we experience what it is to be equal partners with foreign churches," says the UELCI report. In bilateral relations we have to fight with mission boards for equality, but in the LWF there are no such problems. "Churches must be helped to develop their own priorities, and the LWF should function as an instrument to promote concerns of member churches as identified by those churches." (UELCI) CCC has led us beyond bilateral relationships into multilateral ones, says the IELU. We feel a closer partnership relation with the LWF than with mission boards, because there is "no feeling of dependence toward the LWF," only inter-dependence. (Argentina) Implicit in these replies from young churches is the suggestion that the LWF has a moral and spiritual obligation to serve as the advocate of these churches and protect their interests and priorities from undue financial or policy pressure by foreign partners. Quite obviously, no complete agreement on the role that LWF should play in fostering partnership exists. Structures for partnership must be the subject of continuing dialogue and consultation in a framework that takes into account the wide interests of all churches and mission agencies.

A matter dealt with in several draft recommendations presented to CCC concerns "integration" in its several meanings and applications. There is the desire that church cooperation and mission be integrated more fully into the total life and work of the LWF, and that the cleavage between witness, service and other church functions in the LWF structure be overcome. (Recommendation C-I)\* Another recommendation calling for the holding of regular regional and subregional consultations, as well as occasional specialized international consultations, has the effect of promoting regional and global integration. (Recommendation C-III) Another recommendation deals with the incorporation

\*The final recommendations are reprinted here on page 206. For the complete text of the "Together in Mission" paper, including draft recommendations, see report of the All Africa Lutheran Consultation, Botswana (LWF/DCC, 1977).

of studies arising from the practice of church cooperation and mission, or required for CCC decision-making and DCC-operations, directly into CCC. (Recommendation C-IV) Another recommendation, based on the 1973 East African Consultation, calls for the incorporation of mission agencies into local churches and the initiation whenever possible of direct church to church relationships (Recommendation C-V). Finally, a recommendation to develop common ground rules for mutual assistance seeks to bring about greater coordination of funding approaches on a multilateral basis. (Recommendation C-VIII). The rationale for these proposals is given in the introduction to each draft recommendation.

It is obvious that structural modifications, sensibly adopted, can further the goal of church cooperation for mission. By the same token, no structure should ever be considered permanent or irreformable, but must be judged in the light of its ability to further the cooperative missionary task of the churches.

The report from Germany outlines the shape of structures for partnership in mission in terms of the basic biblical, theological, and practical requirements. A free rendering of this helpful statement follows.

1. Mission can never be considered the exclusive concern of a single regional (national, territorial or denominational) church. All churches receive one Gospel and all are called to fulfill together one missionary task.
2. Each local church is properly responsible for fulfilling the missionary task in its own area, but it does so in a representative capacity (paraproto). The gifts and contributions of other churches cannot be refused, nor can the responsibility of other churches for the task be denied.
3. There is no theological validity in speaking further of "giving, sending or receiving churches". All churches are sent and sending, and all churches are under obligation to receive. Every church is therefore simultaneously a giving and a receiving church.
4. The resources available for mission (money, personnel and expertise, etc.) belong to the churches corporately. Therefore the processes of sharing and decision-making must express the corporate will of the churches as determined in prayerful consultation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
5. The concept "church autonomy", as applied to local or regional churches, is theologically questionable. Church autonomy is transcended in obedience to Jesus Christ who sends his whole Church forth in mission. Independence, autonomy, and self-reliance of local churches find their proper realization in the inter-dependence of all parts of the body in mission.
6. The test of partnership is taking mission seriously in one's own area and being willing to share that task with other churches.

## VI Conclusion

This paper has already in its earlier sections noted specific issues and tasks which require attention in the ongoing work of CCC. The various meanings of mission in the specific contexts of local churches need to be articulated and shared. This exchange would stimulate the churches and also contribute to the growth of greater awareness of church identity in mission. Evangelism in particular needs much more emphasis in the work of CCC. The Department can perhaps serve as a general facilitator and coordinator of new ventures in mission. Mission and evangelism concerns of Western majority churches should not be overlooked. The call to unity and the existence of a wide range of ecumenical challenges, roles and relations facing the churches urgently requires attention. Theological reflection on scripture and the confessions and the examination of local situations must go hand in hand. Proposals for structural change, mostly intended to promote integration in some form, are extensively dealt with in the draft recommendations in Section C. All structures, including those of the LWF, need to be constantly scrutinized in the light of the Gospel and of their adaptability to mission.

Only a few summary remarks of a general nature can now be added. These will not deal so much with specific recommendations as with the interpretation of the larger role which the LWF, and CCC in particular, is called to play in the strategy of partnership for mission, as seen by member churches.

1. CCC's primary role and its major service to the churches is as a facilitator, convener and catalyst for the churches in their common mission endeavour. Many responses stress that CCC should not allow its energies to be consumed in processing inter-church aid requests, however important these may be for some churches. CCC should be more than a "middle-man, a project broker, an administrator of inter-church aid." Its chief task is its creative role as stimulator, enabler and coordinator with challenging ideas and inspiration. (Bavaria, Germany) CCC's role is to "discover, articulate and strategize the mission of Lutheran churches on both a global and regional basis". CCC should provide a setting where Lutheran churches can enlighten each other and be a creative catalyst for mission in unity. No one else can play this role. (LCA, USA)
2. CCC's role should be to encourage maturity and identity especially among the churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America. (FELCSA) On occasion it should serve as the advocate of the integrity and interests of member churches over against donor agencies. (India) An example of this is the suggestion that CCC might bring together churches in India (UELCI) with related mission partner boards to discuss questions of partnership, self-reliance and mission in the context of the wisest use of the total mission resources.

3. CCC should become more active in the area of multilateral sharing and relationships. It should foster a two-directional process of sharing in things both material and spiritual. For example, the deepening commitment to missionary witness of African churches and churches in socialist lands should be shared. Because CCC combines the resources and expectations of churches in different circumstances it can become the means where European and North American churches can "gracefully receive" what churches in the Southern hemisphere have to offer through exchange of personnel, ideas and experiences. (Liberia)
4. CCC should not dominate, direct or control the churches from Geneva but should listen, reflect and encourage the communication process between the churches. Regional consultations are a helpful way of doing this. Member churches should be expected to bring to CCC gatherings the insights, problems, challenges and visions of their own churches. CCC can serve as a "sacramental go-between" among the member churches. (Liberia)
5. The churches need to become much more a fellowship of mutual prayer, repentance, and encouragement. CCC should keep before the churches the call to spiritual renewal through the Lord Jesus Christ who makes all things new. In this way it can perhaps make its greatest contribution to partnership in mission.

Dr. James A. Scherer

# CCC New Mandate

## CCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The specific assignment of this commission is:
  1. to support Lutheran churches and groups as they endeavour to carry out the mission imperative of the Lord;
  2. to facilitate contacts and exchange of resources, information, counsel in such a way as to strengthen the life and witness of related churches in all parts of the world;
  3. to provide programs requested by member churches where it is not feasible for the churches to conduct programs themselves.
2. In pursuance of its assignment and within the limits of its resources, the commission is authorized to:
  1. Develop channels for liaison and cooperation among related churches and agencies in fulfilling their mission;
  2. Provide for mutual assistance through which LWF member churches, other related churches, and mission agencies, may strengthen each other, and towards this and develop cooperation with ecumenical bodies in areas where Lutheran churches are involved.  
In dealing with financial, personnel and other assistance, all member churches involved should be part of the decision-making process, based upon mutually agreed criteria and procedures: In mutual assistance, the goals of interdependence and self-reliance should be recognized.
  3. Operate programs and carry out projects for which the services of an international church organization are desired;
  4. Provide for meetings of churches, mission agencies, and related organizations on a global or regional or sub-regional basis in consultation with other LWF commissions.
  5. In view of the mission obligation of the Church, survey the possibilities for evangelistic outreach in the world, make recommendations for the involvement of member churches, and provide necessary coordination.
  6. Initiate and encourage cooperative experimental or pilot projects which seek new forms of witness.
  7. Develop contacts and become familiar with the work and needs of member churches.
  8. Provide special services where necessary on a regional basis.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CCC MANDATE

I. Integration of Mission into the Life of the Church

The 5th Assembly of the LWF at Evian 1970 with its theme "Sent into the world" was deeply involved in searching for the meaning of mission for Lutheran churches and for the LWF. The mission mandate was seen as a comprehensive mandate belonging to the whole Church and therefore also the whole of LWF with all of its departments.

In the restructuring implemented after the Evian Assembly the CCC succeeded the former CWM, carrying on its main thrust together with several other tasks. The emphasis stressed at Evian, that mission belongs to the whole of LWF, was in fact one element which contributed to leaving out the word "mission" from the name of the new commission. A fear however was also expressed, that the distinctive element of mission as an obligation to bring the Gospel to those who have not heard it, might be lost if the substance of mission is reduced into such a functional concept as church cooperation or is interpreted in too comprehensive terms.

Soon after Evian another concern about the nature of mission was voiced. The Executive Committee of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (ECMY) raised in its now famous letter to the LWF, questions about the interrelationship between proclamation and human development and expressed a concern regarding the apparent weakening of the evangelistic dimension. An international discussion ensued culminating in the Nairobi consultation in 1974. It was specifically asked whether the current department structure of the LWF might jeopardize efforts to present the Good News in its totality by implying too sharp a division between evangelism and service.

As a result of the debate the conviction that mission belongs to the whole church and that it is directed to the whole human being and human condition was greatly strengthened in the LWF. Whatever functional division of labour is applied, the mission obligation should set the tone to all functions of the LWF.

Responses from member churches to the CCC inquiry on "Together in Mission" since Adelaide continued to underline the concern that LWF manifest in all its work the wholeness of mission, and that a strict separation between departments and their functions be avoided in the LWF.

It is clearly assumed that a functional division of responsibilities between various units of the LWF is essential and that different approaches by such units of the LWF are inevitable.

Furthermore, the responses remind the CCC of the urgency of the evangelistic task within the total mission of the church, as they point to the conviction that mission is not simply a task or function of the church but the very reason for its existence.

The evangelistic task within the total mission of the church cannot be abandoned without causing damage to the total ministry of the church. Consequently the CCC is urged to give more attention to serving the member churches in this endeavour.

With this background the CCC makes the following recommendations.

It is RECOMMENDED :

- (1) that the Executive Committee encourage all LWF Commissions and units to give priority to projects and programs which express an integrated view of the mission of the church.
- (2) that the General Secretary be requested to give concentrated attention to promoting inter-departmental staff consultation and cooperation.

## II. Revision of CCC Terms of Reference

The present Terms of Reference of the CCC were laid down by the LWF Executive Committee and became effective after the 5th Assembly at Evian 1970. The CCC at its Adelaide meeting in 1975 initiated a self-evaluation as part of the "Together in Mission" study, the purpose of which was twofold : First, it aimed at examining in detail how far CCC/DCC had fulfilled its present mandate. Second, it sought to clarify whether the Terms of Reference should be revised, and if so, in what way. In this self-evaluation the CCC was to be guided by its own experience of the work in 1970-76, and specifically by the responses of churches to the paper and questionnaires on "Together in Mission".

The study shows that the present Terms of Reference give plenty of scope for most of the concerns which member churches have expressed and on which they expect the CCC/DCC to give more emphasis. Here, for example, is expressed the need to provide a forum for consultation and counselling on mission strategies and also to act as a catalytic agency and enabler. The present Terms of Reference do provide for a place for specialized mission agencies in the work of the CCC. Furthermore the present possibilities of all churches, big or small, rich or poor, to find themselves as equal partners in mission in the framework offered by the CCC, and to participate on equal footing in the planning and decision-making for the CCC endeavours, has been especially appreciated by churches in their evaluation of the present CCC mandate.

In light of the study only some modifications of the Terms of Reference are recommended.

The adjustments recommended arise out of the following needs : it is evident that the goal of full partnership in handling mutual assistance needs to be spelled out, and that the remaining connotations of LWF as a donor agency dealing with recipient churches should be eliminated. (Terms of Reference, 2 b.) The role of the CCC in the mission endeavour of churches, aimed at reaching new areas and fields of witness, needs a clearer expression. Finally the recognition of the need of an effective study and research function to back up the planning and evaluation of the CCC work and to strengthen

the basis and effectiveness of the CCC services to churches should find an expression in the Terms of Reference.

RECOMMENDED : to the Executive Committee that the present Terms of Reference of the CCC be amended as follows :

(1) The present paragraph 2 b be replaced by the following :

"Provide for mutual assistance through which LWF member churches, other related churches, and mission agencies, may strengthen each other and develop cooperation with ecumenical bodies in areas where Lutheran churches are involved.

In dealing with financial, personnel, and other assistance, all member churches involved should be part of the decision making process, based upon mutually agreed criteria and procedures. In all mutual assistance, the goals of inter-dependence and self-reliance should be recognized."

(2) The paragraph 2 d should read,

"Provide for meetings of churches, mission agencies, and related organizations on a global or regional or sub-regional basis in consultation with other LWF Commissions".

(3) The Paragraph 2 a should become 2 f and a new 2 e should be added as follows :

"In view of the mission obligation of the Church, survey the possibilities for evangelistic outreach in the world, make recommendations for the involvement of member churches, and provide necessary coordination".

(4) Paragraph f should become g and paragraph g become h.

(5) A new paragraph i be added :

"Conduct such research as is necessary for planning, implementation and evaluation of CCC activities".

### III. Regional, Sub-Regional and Special Consultations

In 1970-76 the CCC sponsored a series of regional and sub-regional consultations which have been much valued by the member churches. The CCC also participated during this period in sponsoring several inter-departmental consultation on special issues, such as the Consultation on Proclamation and Human Development (1974) and on Lutheran Involvement in the Holy Land (1975) and cooperated in consultations sponsored by the Commission on Studies. However, meetings under LWF

sponsorship for the purpose of coordinating mission programs and policies in various geographical areas were discontinued after 1970.

Responses to the "Together in Mission" study expressed the desire of a number of churches in different regions for an expanded program of consultations that would make coordinated mission strategies possible. Two types of consultation are envisaged : representative consultations of member churches for comprehensive discussion of common policy issues in a given region or sub-region, and specialized consultations to deal with particular problems which a group of churches face or particular joint tasks in which they are or plan to be involved together. Both types of consultations should also guide the CCC in its policy and program development.

VOTED : (1) that CCC sponsor, with a certain regularity, consultations of member churches in various regions and sub-regions,

(2) that the main subjects for such consultations be worked out by the CCC on the basis of suggestions by the member churches of the respective areas,

(3) that in the planning of such consultations attention be given to the impulses from the 6th Assembly, to issue related to mission and evangelism, and to concerns to other LWF commissions and units,

(4) that in the case of each regional consultation, provision be made for inter-regional participation and communication and for the use of competent resource persons,

(5) that CCC sponsor, according to the need expressed by member churches, specialized consultations focusing on particular problems, tasks, policies and strategies which a group of churches face in their mission endeavour,

(6) that DCC staff be asked to draft a master plan for implementing these recommendations, including an overall rationale, a provisional schedule for suggested dates and locations for consultations to be held between 1977-84, and a proposed budget, and in consultation with the churches concerned and with other LWF departments to submit such a plan to the CCC meeting in 1978.

#### IV. Study Functions of CCC/DCC

At its 5th Assembly (Evian 1970) the LWF structured its operation into the three departments of Church Cooperation, World Service and Studies. Due to a variety of factors, including the organizational separation between Church Cooperation and Studies, it has not been possible to meet the needs of both the Departments of Studies and Church Cooperation. Several of those who responded to the "Together in Mission" questionnaire called attention to this issue.

RECOMMENDED : (1) that studies related to the fulfillment of the CCC Terms of Reference in so far as they relate to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CCC activities, be carried out by DCC;

(2) that implications for staffing be referred to the new CCC for decision at its first meeting after the Assembly;

and

(3) that provisions be made for the regular sharing of the results of field studies and other practical research and of theological reflections and of missiological insights with member churches through the regular information organs of LWF as well as through special DCC publications.

#### V. Church to Church Relationships

Churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America have repeatedly expressed a strong desire for church to church relationships in preference to being limited to church to mission board or mission society relationships. The CCC has been a valued instrument for promoting this concern. The integration of mission agencies into church structures or official recognition of them as churches' mission instruments has contributed to a call to rethink the whole question of relationships.

Though many western world mission agencies began as independent mission societies, today matters have developed to a point where there are a variety of relationships between the churches of Europe and North America and those of Asia, Africa and Latin America. These relationships include those of

independent mission society - church,  
 church-related mission society - church,  
 church mission departments - church,  
 church divisions - church, and  
 church agency - church agency.

Besides the present variety of mission agency/church relationships within LWF, another complication lies in some cases in the LWF national committee structures. For example, overseas churches find it difficult to be in contact with a church or churches through the national committee. Sometimes churches, their agencies and/or related groups find it difficult to establish contacts with the LWF or with their counterparts in other churches through their own national committee.

VOTED : (1) that the DCC undertake a survey to the nature and status of existing relationships between member churches of the LWF; and provide encouragement and assistance to the churches in the further development and strengthening of such relationships consistent with the principles of self-reliance and partnership.

(2) that the CCC, in consultation with LWF member churches involved, explore the possibility of including in its programs the participation of the independent Lutheran mission societies and agencies that so desire.

RECOMMENDED : (1) that member churches ensure that their relationships with the LWF be structured in such a way as to include the interests of all LWF units and that the work of LWF national committees, where they exist, be structured accordingly;

(2) that the functions of the national committees be structured in such a way that concerned units of the related church or churches may be represented.

#### VI. Ground Rules for Mutual Assistance

The administration of mutual assistance has become increasingly complex due to the number of partners involved, the existence of multiple channels, and the importance of respecting established goals for self-reliance. Misunderstandings, conflicts, and harmful competition frequently result if prior agreement does not exist with regard to criteria, priorities, and the use of particular channels. CCC has a role to play not only as a multilateral channel for inter-church aid in its own right, but also as a liaison body seeking to coordinate the mutual assistance of member churches. The development of appropriate ground rules would do much to alleviate harmful tensions and misunderstandings and also foster greater cooperation for mission.

VOTED : (1) that DCC begin preparations for regional consultations or workshops on "Criteria and Mechanisms for Mutual Assistance in an Era of Interdependent Relationships and Self-Reliance" to be held within the framework of consultations as mentioned under III of this document;

(2) that a wide spectrum of representatives of interested member churches, mission agencies, national committees and ecumenical agencies be contacted for ideas and contributions;

(3) that DCC staff be asked to submit a plan of implementation of these resolutions to the CCC officers' meeting early in 1977.

#### VII. World Mission

The Foreign missionary movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries was a movement from the churches of Europe and North America to the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America developed, the continuing needs for mission in word and deed throughout the world were recognized and international cooperative efforts developed under such catch words as "two way traffic", "internationalization of mission", and "six continent mission". Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America are not only involved in mission within their own borders but reaching out in a variety of trans-cultural and trans-national mission projects in near and distant lands.

From LWF member churches voices are being raised calling for a renewed evangelistic emphasis throughout the world. This emphasis should be planned and implemented in ways recognizing the responsibility of all LWF member churches to be involved in local and overseas mission with the contribution of their resources of people, money and insights. It is recognized that such evangelistic efforts should be carried out in cooperation with other Christian groupings.

VOTED : (1) that CCC renew its offer to member churches and related agencies to serve as a channel of communication and negotiation between churches and groups seeking either to offer or to receive further assistance in mission and evangelism;

(2) that CCC reconsider in consultation with LWF member churches who are to be invited to its future meetings so that these meetings can more effectively serve member churches and their related agencies in the surveying of the possibilities for mission and evangelistic outreach in all regions of the world;

(3) that the new CCC place Mission and Evangelism as a major item on the agenda of one of its early meetings after the 6th Assembly;

(4) that DCC staff be asked to begin preparations for a comprehensive plan of implementation of the paragraph 2 e of the proposed new Terms of Reference, to be submitted to the new CCC.

# Report of the North East/South East Asia Church Leaders' Conference

The North/Southeast Asia Lutheran Church Leaders Consultation has met in Manila October 18-20, 1976, under the theme "In Christ - A New Community". We look forward to the Lutheran World Federation General Assembly in 1977 with the expectation of further clarification of this theme in regard to its basic theological meaning and specifically Lutheran implications. We hope to use the LWF Assembly findings in our continued study and application of this theme for the purpose of advancing the mission of the church in Asia. To this end we propose the following:

We carry out a thorough study of the meaning of mission in regard to both theology and practice. The study will give attention to potential joint mission strategy in Asia, our global mission responsibility, mission among ethnic Asian groups abroad, and the impact of Asian religions upon churches in both the east and the west. The study will be carried out as follows:

- a. Use the occasion of the 1976 All Asia Conference in Singapore to prepare a detailed study plan.
- b. Hold regional seminars during 1977 for local input, using the APAS structure.
- c. Hold an All Asia Mission Seminar in 1978 to assimilate the results of the study and to propose plans and projects for mission by churches individually and jointly, requesting the Department of Church Cooperation of LWF to make financial provision for this seminar.

We establish an Asian Lutheran newsletter for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding, better communication, and information sharing among the Lutheran churches of Asia, with particular attention to the mission task of the churches and to resource sharing and personnel exchange.

This newsletter is to be published in English on a regular basis and distributed to interested churches and agencies around the world and to each Lutheran church in Asia for translation and use in local publications.

We request Rev. Anders Hansen of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in

Hong Kong to serve as editor and to prepare a detailed plan for consideration by the 1976 All Asia Conference in Singapore, the plan to include a suggested title, number of issues per year, range of distribution, tentative budget and method for cost sharing by the churches, and other matters as required.

We make a study of church/mission board relationships to be carried out as follows:

- a. Request the 1976 All Asia Conference in Singapore to appoint a commission of three to coordinate the study.
- b. Each church will be asked to submit a report in regard to relations with its board or supporting agency.
- c. One of the commissioners may travel to each country to develop the study as needed.
- d. The commission will submit at least a preliminary report to the churches prior to the 1978 All Asia Seminar.
- e. Hold an All Asia conference between boards and churches in 1979.
- f. Request the Department of Church Cooperation of LWF to provide financial assistance as needed, including a travel grant in 1977 through the Scholarship and Exchange Service, application to be made by the church to which the travelling member of the commission belongs.

We recommend that the All Asia APAS consultation be used for the study of Asian religions and/or pseudo-Christian sects which are of special concern to the churches as they pursue their mission.

We recommend to the 1976 All Asia Conference in Singapore that the assistance of the LWF be solicited in the preparation of a directory of Asian Lutheran leaders and specialists for the purpose of information and personnel exchange.

We recommend that, in principle, regular meetings of Asian Lutheran church leaders be held as follows, and that the Department of Church Cooperation of LWF be requested to provide financial assistance for regional and All Asia meetings:

Local (normally one country, using the APAS structure)	-	Once every 2 years
Regional (North Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia)	-	Once every 4 years
All Asia	-	Once every 6 years

## Information in Brief

We recommend that the LWF China study programme be continued but that it involve all concerned churches in Asia as far as possible.

The Hong Kong-Taiwan group requests that the LWF through the Asia Secretary of the Department of Church Cooperation facilitate a special meeting of the leaders of the Lutheran churches of Hong Kong and Taiwan for the purpose of encouraging interaction among the Lutheran churches in this region.

Lunch in the hotel dining room. Clearly visible are the president of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, Rev. Dorairaj Peter (far right) and, in the foreground, Mrs. Daisy Rajeswari of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Dr. Frans Sianipar from Indonesia, chairman of the Third All Asia Lutheran Conference, addresses the delegates.

# Information in Brief on Asian Lutheran Churches

ASIA: 17,224,700 sq.miles (44,611,973 sq.km.)  
Population (1975 estimated) 2,269,072,000

Six of the world's most densely populated countries - Peoples' Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, account for 80 percent of Asia's population and for 58 percent of the world's population.

Religion: All the major religions of the world - Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam began in Asia.

## Major Regions:

1. Middle East: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon
2. South Asia: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka
3. South East Asia: Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea
4. North East Asia: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Philippines
5. Australasia: Australia and New Zealand

### I. Middle East

1. Israel: Area 7,992 sq.miles (20,700 sq.km.)  
Population (1975 estimated) 3,450,000

(i) Lutheran Church (Haknesia Halutaranit)

Superintendent: The Rev. Otto Høvik  
Rotschild Street 3  
P.O. Box 334, Bat Yam

(ii) Finnish Missionary Society

Pastor: The Rev. Pertti Huttunen  
25, Shivtei Israel St.  
P.O. Box 584  
91000 Jerusalem

membership: not available

2. Jordan: Area 36,832 sq.miles (95,394 sq.km.)  
Population (1975 est.) 2,674,000

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan

Spiritual Leader: The Very Rev. Helmut Glatte  
President: The Rev. Daoud Haddad  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer  
Muristan Road  
P.O. Box 14076, Jerusalem M. (1,200)

3. Lebanon: Area 3,950 sq.miles (10230 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 2,550,000

Middle East Lutheran Ministry

Chairman: The Rev. Dennis Hilgendorf  
 P.O. Box 2496  
 Beirut

II. South Asia

1. India: Area 1,269,420 sq.miles (3,287,782 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 600 million

(i) Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Samuel W. Schmitthenner  
 P.O. Box 205  
 Guntur 522002  
 Andhra Pradesh

M. (300,000)

(ii) Arcot Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Dorairaj Peter  
 D.M. Bungalow  
 Nellikuppam 607105  
 Tamil Nadu, S. India

M. (20,171)

(iii) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Rubin Israelsson  
 P.O. Box 1  
 Chhindwara 48001  
 Madhya Pradesh

M. (9,000)

(iv) Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. S. Barla  
 G.E.L. Church  
 Ranchi, Bihar

M. (335,000)

(v) India Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: Rev. Dr. G. Thomas Edward  
 9, Batcha Sahib St.  
 Choolaimedu 600094  
 Madras

M. (46,500)

(vi) Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. A.C. Kondpan  
 Jeypore  
 Koraput District  
 Orissa

M. (70,000)

(vii) Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Munshi M. Tudu  
 Koroya Mission  
 P.O. K-Madhuadih via Dumka 814101  
 Santal Parganas  
 Bihar

M. (41,471)

(viii) South Andhra Lutheran Church  
 President: The Rev. V. John  
 Mission Compound  
 Gudur 524101  
 Nellore District  
 Andhra Pradesh M. (16,000)

(ix) Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church  
 President The Rt. Rev. L. Easter Raj  
 and Bishop Tranquebar House  
 Tiruchirapalli 620001  
 S. India M. (74,898)

2. Bangladesh: Area 55,126 sq.miles (147,776 sq. km.)  
 Population (1974 est.) 74,990,800  
 Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church  
 General Superintendent: The Rev. Hans Øverby  
 Amnura Mission  
 P.O. Amnura  
 Rajshahi District (6,200)

3. Burma: Area 261,789 sq.miles (678,030 sq.km.)  
 Population(1974 est.) 30,270,000  
 Lutheran Bethlehem Church  
 Pastor: The Rev. J.J. Andrews  
 181-183 Theinbyu Street  
 Kandawglay P.O.  
 Rangoon (600)

4. Sri Lanka (Ceylon): Area 25,332 sq. miles (65,610 sq.km.)  
 Pop. (1974 est.) 13,393,000  
 Sri Lanka Lutheran Mission  
 Chairman: The Rev. James Fergin  
 48, Waterfield Drive  
 Nurwara Eliya (N.A.)

### III. South East Asia

1. Malaysia: Area 122,316 sq.miles (329,747 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 12,093,000

2. Singapore: Area 227 sq.miles (588 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 2,249,900

(i) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore  
 Bishop: The Rt. Rev. E.B. Muthusami  
 21, Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad  
 Kuala Lumpur 09-07 M. (2,000)

(ii) Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore  
 Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Carl M. Fisher  
 P.O.B. 1068  
 Jalan Semangat  
 Petaling Jaya  
 Selangor M. (4,200)

(iii) Basel Christian Church of Malaysia  
 President: Datuk Fung Shyam Shen  
 548, Jalan Saga  
 Likas  
 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah M. (9,519)

3. Indonesia: Area 782,663 sq.miles (2,027,087 sq.km)  
 Population (1975 est.) 129,082,600

(i) Batak Christian Community Church (Punguan Kristen Batak PKB)  
 Chairman: The Rev. L.H. Sinaga  
 Jalan H.O.S. Cokroaminoto No. 96  
 Jakarta-Pusat M. (12,500)

(ii) Batak Protestant Christian Church  
 (Huria Kristen Batak Protestant HKBP)  
 Ephorus: The Rev. Gustav H.M. Siahaan  
 Pearaja Tarutung,  
 Tapanuli  
 Sumatra M. (1,160,000)

(iii) Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia  
 Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Andar Lumbantobing  
 Jalan Kapten Sitorus No. 13  
 Pematang Siantar  
 Sumatra M. (151,767)

(iv) Indonesian Christian Church  
 (Huria Kristen Indonesia HKI)  
 President: The Rev. T.J. Sitorus  
 Jalan Marihat 109-111  
 Pematang Siantar  
 Sumatra M. (250,000)

N.B. Another large Batak Community called Angkola is likely to come into existence in the near future

(v) Simalungun Protestant Christian Church  
 (Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun GKPS)  
 Ephorus: The Rev. Samuel Purba Dasuha  
 Jalan Jenderal Sudirman 14  
 P.O. Box 2  
 Pematang Siantar  
 Sumatra M. (120,000)

4. Papua New Guinea: Area 178,260 sq.miles (461,690 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 2,756,500

(i) Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea  
 Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Zurewe Zurenuo  
 P.O. Box 80  
 Lae M. (400,000)

(ii) Wabag Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. T. Waima Waesa  
P.O. Box 111  
Wabag (53,500)

(iii) Siassi Lutheran Church

President: Mr. Martin Ningau  
F.M.B.S. Siassi  
via Lae (7,000)

IV. North East Asia

1. Japan: Area 145,747 sq.miles (377,484 sq.km.)  
Population (Oct. 1976 census) 111,930,000

(i) Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Shiuchi Kaku  
Lutheran Ichigaya Centre 1-1  
Ichigaya Sadohara-Cho  
Shinjuku-ku  
Tokyo 162 M. (18,357)

(ii) Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Tomio Ueno  
Osaka Lutheran Center  
Minato P.O. Box 32  
Minato-ku  
Isoji 2-2-18  
Osaka 552 M. (1,653)

(iii) West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Gyoji Nabetani  
2-2-11, Nakajima-dori  
Fukiai-ku  
Kobe 651 (1,562)

(iv) Japan Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Chizuo Shibata  
2-32, Fujimi 1-chome  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 102 (2,918)

(v) Lutheran Brethren Japan Mission

Chairman: Rev. James Olson  
2-57, Tsukigaoka, 2 chome  
Morioka  
Iwate Prefecture (600)

(vi) Scandinavian East Asia Mission

Field Representative: The Rev. Notto R. Thelle  
5914-367 Yamazaki  
Fukuroi-shi  
Shizuoka-ken (20)

2. Korea: Area 38,130 sq.miles (98,758 sq.km.)  
 Population (1973 est.) 6,289,600  
 Lutheran Church in Korea  
 President: The Rev. Won Sang Ji  
 CPO Box 1239  
 Seoul 100 M. (1,245)

3. Philippines: Area 115,800 sq.miles (300,000 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 42,108,000  
 Lutheran Church in the Philippines  
 President: The Rev. Jose Fuliga  
 P.O. Box 16  
 Baguio City 0201 M. (12,213)

4. Hong Kong: Area 403 sq.miles (1,040 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 4,366,600

- (i) Chinese Rhenish Church, Hong Kong Synod  
 President: The Rev. Cheung King Man  
 335, Nathan Road  
 10th Floor, Poi Fung Mansion  
 Kowloon M. (8,000)
- (ii) Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong  
 President: The Rev. Ming-Chieh Wu  
 President elect: Prof. Paul Hu (from June 1977)  
 50A, Waterloo Road  
 Kowloon M. (10,236)
- (iii) Tsung Tsin Mission, Hong Kong  
 President: Mr. Wong Sun-Man  
 59 Hong Keung Street  
 2nd Floor, Front Block  
 San-Po-Kong  
 Kowloon M. (8,000)
- (iv) Lutheran Church - Hong Kong Synod  
 President: The Rev. Andrew Chiu  
 68, Begonia Road  
 Yau Yat Chuen  
 Kowloon (6,072)
- (v) Tao Fong Shan Christian Institute  
 Shatin New Territories  
 Hong Kong

5. Republic of China (Taiwan): Area 13,893 sq.miles (35,981 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 16,049,100

(i) Taiwan Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Chang Chi-Tang  
 15, Hang Chow South Road, Sec. 2  
 Taipei (M. (6,206)

(ii) China Evangelical Lutheran Church

President: The Rev. Winson Chu  
 P.O. Box 543  
 Taipei (2,340)

(iii) Chinese Lutheran Brethren Church

President: The Rev. Hsin-Min Hsu  
 214, Nan Ta Road  
 Hsin-Chu (3,124)

Note: In the Hong Kong-Taiwan region there are six more small Lutheran groups on which full information is not available at the time of going to press.

V. Australasia

1. Australia: Area 2,967,900 sq.miles (7,686,850 sq.km.)  
 Population (1975 est.) 13,542,100

Lutheran Church of Australia

President: The Rev. Leslie Grope  
 Lutheran Church House  
 58, O'Connell Street  
 North Adelaide  
 South Australia 5006 (114,064)

2. New Zealand: Area 103,747 sq.miles (268,704 sq.km.)  
 Population 3,095,000

Lutheran Church of New Zealand

District President: The Rev. L.G. Steicke  
 38, Somerset Crescent  
 Palmerston North (3,013)

Note: M. indicates membership in LWF  
 Number in brackets is church members

Dr. Yoshiro Ishida (Japan) proposes greetings to the LWF International Women's Conference, Sri Lanka, (see page 225). Seated are (left) Mrs. Martha Mamora (Indonesia) and Mrs. Rita Wang (Hong Kong).



Mr. A. J. Arnold, from the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, himself a former judge, makes a legal point during the discussion on visas to Sri Lanka for Taiwan citizens.

# Greetings to LWF International Conference of Women, Sri Lanka

All of us gathered in Singapore for the Third All Asia Lutheran Conference, which has directly preceded your meeting, send our warm greetings.

During our meeting we have become more deeply aware of the importance of working toward the day when the Church will be a community in which all people, women and men, might live in fullness and contribute fully and equally as partners to our common Christian tasks.

May your meeting provide new insight, an increased feeling of mutual support and renewed courage.

However, we have learned with regret and deep concern of the fact that delegates from some member churches including Taiwan Lutheran Church have been refused entry into Sri Lanka by the authorities concerned and consequently been prevented from attending your meeting.

Our prayers join with yours,

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Third All Asia Lutheran Conference  
Singapore  
December 4, 1976.



# List of Participants

Name	Address	Church/ Organisation	Status
1. ARNOLD Mr. A.J.	24 Lakshmi Street Alagappa Nagar Madras 600010	UELCI India	Observer
2. BLACKLOCK Mr. Raymond T.	ELC-PNG P.O. Box 80 Lae, Papua, NG.	Evang.Luth. Church of New Guinea	Delegate
3. CATHERINE Miss H.D.	c/o Lutheran Church Mettuppatti (Post) Tiruchirapalli Dt.621706 Tamil Nadu, S. India	Tamil Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate
4. CHANG KUEI-YUEH Miss Carol-Ann	Taiwan Lutheran Church 15, Hangchow South Road Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.	Taiwan Luth. Church	Youth
5. CHANG Rev. Gideon	P.O.B. 1068 Jalan Semangat Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
6. CHARI Ms. Emily	68, Jalan Gumilang Singapore 23	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Visitor
7. CHARI Dr. (Mrs.) J.D.	38, Jalan University Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
8. CHEAH Mr. David	P.O.B. 1068 Jalan Semangat Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Youth
9. CHEUNG Rev. King-Man Stephen	335, Nathan Road 10th Floor Poi Fung Mansion Kowloon, Hong Kong	Chinese Rhenish Church HK Synod	Delegate
10. CHIU Rev. Andrew	68 Begonia Road Yau Yat Chuen Kowloon, Hong Kong	Luth. Church Missouri Synod HK Conference	Delegate

	Name	Address	Church/ Organisation	Status
11.	CHONG Rev. Daniel	P.O.B. 1068 Jalan Semangat Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Youth
12.	CHOU CHING-FU Rev. Peter	15, Hangchow South Road Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.	Taiwan Luth. Church	Delegate
13.	CHUNG Mr. Ming Kai	335, Nathan Road 10th Floor Poi Fung Mansion Kowloon, Hong Kong	Chinese Rhenish Church HK Synod	Youth
14.	COLEMAN Miss Janet	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff
15.	DAS Mr. Vincent	68, Jalan Taman Seputeh Kuala Lumpur Selangor, Malaysia	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
16.	DAVID Mr. Jakatong	ELC-PNG P.O. Box 80 Lae, Papua, NG.	Evang. Luth. Church of New Guinea	Delegate
17.	DOROW Rev. Maynard	C.P.O. Box 1239 Seoul, Korea	Luth. Church in Korea	Delegate
18.	DURAI RAJ Mr. S.G.	21, Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad, Brickfields Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
19.	EASTER RAJ Bishop L.	"Tranquebar House" Tiruchirapalli 620001 S. India	Tamil Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate
20.	FISHER Bishop Carl M.	P.O.B. 1068 Jalan Semangat Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia.	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Joint Organiser Host Church
21.	FOONG Mr. Siew Khong	P.O.B. 1068 Jalan Semangat Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
22.	FUNG Mr. Khyam Shen	548, Jalan Saga Likas, Kota Kinabalu Sabah, Malaysia	Basel Christian Church of Malaysia	Delegate
23.	GROPE Rev. Leslie	22A, Thames Avenue Klemzig 5087 South Australia	Luth. Church of Australia	Delegate

	Name	Address	Church/ Organisation	Status
24.	HADDAD Rev. Daoud	P.O. Box 14076 Jerusalem, Israel	Evang. Luth Church in Jordan	Delegate
25.	HELLBERG Dr. C.J.	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff/ Director DCC
26.	HSIAO Dr. Andrew K.H.	Lutheran Theological Seminary Box 20, Shatin N.T. Hong Kong	Evang. Luth Church of Hong Kong	Speaker
27.	HU Mr. Paul Lien-Huei	Luther House, 4th Floor, 50A, Waterloo Road Kowloon, Hong Kong	Evang. Luth. Church of Hong Kong	Delegate
28.	HUTAGALUNG Dr. Sutan M.	Jalan Kartini 44 Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Christian Prot. Church in Indonesia	Speaker
29.	IDLAND Mrs. Y.	15-3 chome, Nishi Tezukayama Sumiyoshi-ku Osaka city, Japan 558	Kinki Evang. Luth. Church	Youth
30.	ISHIDA Dr. Yoshiro	Japan Luth. Theol. College 10 20 3-chome, Osawa, Mitaka-shi Tokyo 181, Japan	Japan Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate
31.	ISRAELSSON Bishop B. Rubin	P.O. Box No. 1 Chhindwara M.P. 480001 India	Evang. Luth. Church in Madhya Pradesh	Delegate
32.	JAMES RAJ Mr. D.	Bethel T.C.5/603/1 Perurkada Trivandrum 695005 Kerala, India.	India Evang. Luth. Church	Youth
33.	JI Rev. Won Sang	C.P.O. Box 1239 Seoul, Korea	Luth. Church in Korea	Delegate
34.	JOHNSON Rev. Gnanabaranam	Box 297 Church of Sweden Mission 75105 Uppsala, Sweden	Tamil Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate
35.	KAMBU Mr. Dale	Box 111 Wabag Papua, New Guinea	Wabag Luth. Church	Delegate
36.	KATTUPALLI Ms. Daisy R.	Iowa Girl's High School Repalle, Guntur Dt., Andhra, S. India.	Andhra Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate

	Name	Address	Church/ Organisation	Status
37.	KONDPAK Bishop Abinash C.	JELC Central Office PO Jeypore 764001 Koraput Dt., Orissa India	Jeypore Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate
38.	KUMAR Mr. Uttam	Lutheran Bhavan P.O. Box 30 Chhindwara M.P. 480001, India	Evang. Luth. Church in Madhya Pradesh	Delegate
39.	LAKING Rev. Jose	P.O. Box 507 Manila, Philippines	Luth. Church in the Philippines	
40.	LEE Mr. Chee-Kong	10, Lai Yin Lane Tung Lo Wan Road Hong Kong	Chinese Rhenish Church HK Synod	Observer
41.	LEHTONEN Rev. Risto	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff
42.	LOKE Rev. Hoy San	P.O.B. 1068 Jalan Semangat Petaling Jaya Selangor, Malaysia	Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
43.	LUMBANTOBING Dr. A.	Jln. Kpt. M.H. Sitorus 13 Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Christian Prot. Church in Indonesia	Delegate
44.	LUMBANTOBING Mrs. S	Jln. Kpt. M.H. Sitorus 13 Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Christian Prot. Church in Indonesia	Delegate
45.	LUMBANTOBING Mr. Tiopan	Jalan Ciumbullevit 88 Bandung Indonesia	Batak Christian Community Church	Youth
46.	LUMBANTOBING Rev. Waldemar	Jalan Marihat 109-111 Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Indonesian Christian Church	Delegate
47.	MADDELA Dr. Abel	15, Madras Christian College Tambaram, Madras 600059, S. India	Madras Christian College	Speaker
48.	MALANGGEN Mr. Misob	Lutheran Economic Service CDS/LWF P.O. Box 80 Lae, Papua, N.G.		Delegate
49.	MAMORA Mrs. Martha L.	Jalan Marihat 109-111 Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Indonesian Christian Church	Delegate
50.	MARTENSEN Dr. Daniel F.	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff

	Name	Address	Church/ Organisation	Status
51.	MAU Dr. Carl H.	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff/ Gen. Sec. LWF
52.	MEYERS Mr. Phillip	P.O. Box 1783 Tel Aviv, Israel	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Delegate
53.	MOSES Miss Rajan	21, Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad, Brickfields Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Youth
54.	MUNTHE Rev. Armencius	Jln. Jend. Sudirman 14 Kotak Pos 2 Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Simalungun Prot. Christian Church	Delegate
55.	MUTHUSAMI Bishop Ernest B.	21, Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad, Brickfields Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate/ Joint Host Church
56.	MUTHUSAMI Rev. Moses	5 Lorong 2-B Jalan Abdul Samad Johor Baru, Johore	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Delegate
57.	MWAKISUNGA Rev. Amon D.	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff
58.	NABETANI Rev. Gyoji	2-3-13 Nakajimadori Fukiai-ku Kobe 651, Japan	West Japan Evang. Luth. Church	Delegate
59.	NAPITUPULU-SILALAHI Mrs. Sinta	Rajawali Selatan I/64 A Jakarta Utara Indonesia	Batak Prot. Christian Church	Delegate
60.	NATHAN Miss Jeyanthi	21, Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad, Brickfields Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Evang. Luth. Church in Malaysia & Singapore	Youth
61.	NELDNER Mr. Brian W.	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff
62.	PARDEDE Dr. T.D.	Jalan Imam Bonjol 17 Medan, Sumatra Indonesia	Batak Prot. Christian Church	Delegate
63.	PARKIN Rev. H.	Fakultas Theologia Nommensen University 4, Jalan Asahan Pematangsiantar Sumatra, Indonesia	Nommensen University	Speaker

	Name	Address	Church/ Organisation	Status
64.	PEDERSEN Mr. Odd K.	LWF, Geneva	Lutheran World Federation	Staff/ Press
65.	PETER Rev. Dorairaj	D.M. Bungalow Nellikuppam 607105 Tamilnadu, India	Arcot Luth. Church	Delegate
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67.	POSPOS Dr. Polin L.	Nommensen University Jalan Sutomo 4A Medan, Sumatra Indonesia	Batak Prot. Christian Church	Delegate
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